PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY MANUAL

Version 1.0

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OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

expect Success

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN OUSD

The Oakland Unified School District is committed to supporting high levels of learning for every student, ensuring that students are prepared for success in college, in their careers, and as citizens. The core values underlying our collective work are achievement, equity, and accountability.

Over the past few years, individuals from across OUSD have engaged in a reflective inquiry process that yielded a set of ambitious goals, chief among these being: *All students should graduate prepared to succeed in college and career*. Several strategies have been identified to support schools, and the teachers within schools, in attaining these goals. Given our collective responsibility for student learning, one of the primary district-wide strategic practices is the development of professional learning communities.

> *The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community.*
>
> - Milbrey McLaughlin, Professor, Stanford University

Professional development in OUSD has therefore been built around creating and sustaining professional learning communities (PLCs). The principles and practices of PLCs are supported by network officers and Instructional Services, and mirrored across all areas of the district: in schools, networks, cross-school teams, Central Services, and the district leadership.

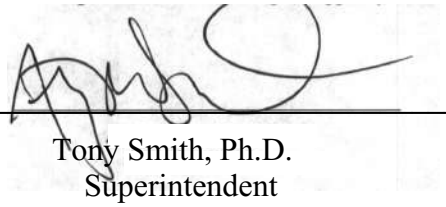
Every school in OUSD is developing into a professional learning community. Many schools began this process years ago, while others are just starting out. Each school also has its own distinct culture and learning climate within which its PLC will emerge. Thus, every school's journey will be unique, with the ultimate PLC structures and practices varying somewhat among schools. Our common charge, however, is to ensure that our PLCs are focused on equity and achievement for every student.

This PLC Manual is intended to provide guidance and support to schools at all stages of the PLC development process. The manual is not intended to be a definitive, all-inclusive resource The primary audience for this manual is school-site administrators.

This manual represents the collective efforts of a wide range of OUSD personnel—thank you to those who contributed to this project. The manual is a work in progress; we will regularly revise it based upon your experience. Please forward any comments, questions, and feedback to John Hall at john.hall@ousd.k12.ca.us.

You can access an electronic version of the manual on the OUSD web page: Click on the *Teachers* tab, then the *Programs and Projects* tab, then *Professional Learning Community Resources*. You will have to enter your username and password to access this area of the website (same as email username and password).

Looking forward to continuing to support your development as professional learning communities.



Tony Smith, Ph.D.
Superintendent

Brad Stam
Chief Academic Officer

FOREWORD

When Amy Malen first approached me with the idea for this guide she said, "I want to create something that both new and returning principals can easily access as a reference for district-wide best practices. It shouldn't be prescriptive because each school is at a different stage in its development but it *should* capture the exciting work that is happening in our district so that leaders can have models of what is possible."

As a result, we have paired summaries of the latest research with "real life" examples from some of our schools. Behind the main ideas of some sections are entire bodies of literature that you can reference should you want more detail. Just check the footnotes at the bottom of each page to locate the original source. We also recommend *Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work* and the *Learning by Doing* workbook, and invite you to visit the "All Things PLC" website if you want additional guidance, examples, and tools.

In addition to providing a framework for the best practices, Amy also wanted to call attention to some of the work that is happening across our different networks (elementary, middle, and high school). We hope that by doing so, you will benefit from the range of knowledge and practices being implemented here in Oakland.

Finally, we wanted to give you a tool to help you identify the support you need and to guide your conversations with support providers. Our goal is to help you be critical consumers of the resources available to you throughout the district.

We know you can't do everything. Even without yet having opened the doors to children, the year is already at full gallop. So we hope that as the year progresses, when you start to feel challenged or discouraged you will turn to this guide and find some hope and inspiration as well as some good ideas to pull you through.

With deep respect and admiration,

- Tania Gutierrez, Data Coach

Tania Gutierrez is an independent data coach in OUSD. She has been working with Oakland schools for the past six years. Prior to coming to Oakland, Tania worked with the San Francisco Education Fund, Partners in School Innovation, and the Consortium on Chicago Pubic School Research. She began her education career as a teacher in Compton, California.

Special Thanks to:

Amy Malen - For conceptualizing, supporting, and managing this project.

John Hall - For providing the sources and assuring the integrity of the project.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Resources

CHAPTER 1:

What is a Professional Learning Community?

Professional Learning Community Defined

A professional learning community is characterized by a set of core beliefs and practices: a commitment to the learning of each student and structures that support teachers' focus on student learning. When a school functions as a PLC, adults within the school embrace high levels of learning for each student as both the reason the school exits and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it.

There is substantial ambiguity regarding the term Professional Learning Community. The term is often used to describe any gathering of individuals with a common, though vague, purpose. The lack of precision is an obstacle to implementing PLCs because as Mike Schmoker observes, "clarity precedes competence" (2004). Thus, throughout this guide we define, redefine, PLCs to an extent that may seem redundant. We are nonetheless convinced that redundancy can be a powerful tool in effective communication; it certainly beats the current ambiguity.

The three "Big Ideas" of PLCs, outlined above, emphasize the collective focus on student learning; the specific structures of a PLC exist to support and sustain this focus. This student-focused essence of a PLC is described in the following definition by DuFour, et. Al. (2006):

> Educators committed to working collaboratively in ongoing processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.

Building upon this essence, we can envision a list of PLC attributes that support the "Big Ideas":

- ***Shared Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals***. A collective commitment to what the people in the school believe and what they seek to create.
- ***Collaborative Structures***. Interdependent teams of teachers working towards common goals, collective responsibility for the achievement of every student.
- ***Goal Orientation.*** Students, teachers, and administrators setting goals and engaging in ongoing inquiry regarding progress towards the goals.
- ***Continuous Improvement***. A collective focus on organizational renewal and a constant search for a better way to characterize the heart of a professional learning community.
- ***Research and Reflection***. Adults serving as lead learners in the community: a relentless questioning of the status quo, testing of new methods and reflecting on results.[1]

[1] Adapted from Schmoker (2006)

Getting Started with PLCs

Each chapter of this guide outlines an important component of effective PLCs. Ideally each aspect is addressed in a logical manner throughout the year. For example, Chapter 2 addresses backwards mapping (which usually happens over the summer). Chapter 3 explains how to analyze your data --skills that aren't really needed until after some data has been collected. Chapter 4 describes inquiry methods and interventions, concepts that are typically considered in the middle of the year after everyone has done their best and needs new ideas. Chapter 5 gives ideas for differentiation, a teaching practice that takes time to master. Chapter 6 focuses on logistics, work that also commonly happens over the summer. Finally, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 describe overarching concepts on which the entire success of PLCs rests: managing towards results and building collective responsibility.

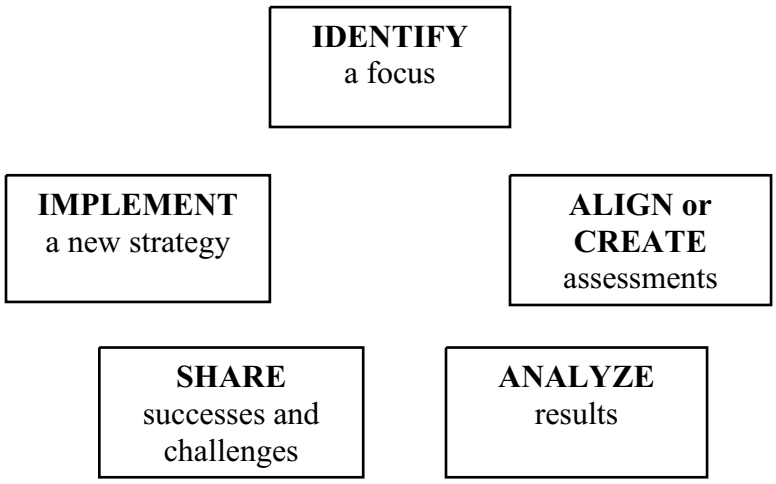
Every school has different needs so we imagine that some chapters will be more useful to you than others. What you choose to emphasize and/or learn more about this year is up to you. However, if you are not sure where to begin, here are some recommendations:

Priority #1- Enrolling New Members

Most schools experience some turn over every year, therefore it is important that at the start of the year each new member of a team (be it to the school or to the grade level) is introduced to the norms and expectations of PLCs *before* any work occurs. **(Ch 4)**

Priority #2- Mapping out the Cycle

Next, if you have not yet calendared when or how often PLCs will meet, you will need to decide that quickly and publish a formal written schedule that is public to everyone. The calendar should outline when each of the following steps will take place. For best results, repeat the cycle after each set of formative assessments. At minimum, each teacher should engage in the cycle after each benchmark assessment. **(Ch 6)**



Priority #3- Backwards Mapping the Standards

Although, ideally backwards mapping happens over the summer, if teachers are new to the process, they will need some time at the beginning of the year to identify their focus standards. If there is no time in your calendar to do this, you or your instructional coaches can review your schools' performance data and determine the focus standards for each grade level yourselves, or follow the recommendations by the district. The drawback is that teachers may not understand why the standards have been chosen. Regardless, someone should identify priority standards before group work begins. **(Ch 2)**

Priority #4- Analyzing CST Results

Once teachers have identified their priorities for instruction, the first data set they should examine is CST results and/or the last benchmark test. Teachers should use these for personal reflection as well as to set goals for the year. Later, when students complete their first interims, teachers should review those results to either confirm and or modify their original goals. This represents the initial data analysis task in the cycle of inquiry. **(Ch 3/7)**

Priority #5- Setting Goals

Ideally, goals are set at the beginning of the year and are based on the most recent data (CST results and/or the last benchmark test) and then modified after the first district benchmark. **(Ch 2)**

Chapter 2:

What do we want all students to learn?

Topics
- Choosing Focus Standards
- Backwards Planning
- Identifying Learning Targets
- Student Goal Setting

Sometimes we assume that we all agree about what it is important for students to learn. Even though the California Department of Education is clear about what students are *required* to learn, when teachers are pressed for time, they often make choices about what content to cover and what to skip. These choices may be based on what is weighted most heavily on the CST or what is "easier" to teach or what is going to be covered on the next district benchmark.

While some of these factors should be considered, if treated in isolation they can result in a fragmented education for students. For example, within a team, each teacher may have a different set of criteria which guides their choices about what content to emphasize. Therefore, within a grade, students may receive very different instruction despite having access to the same curriculum. *To prevent this discrepancy it is very important that at the start of each year, teachers have an explicit conversation with each other about what they believe is important content for their grade level and why.*

Below are some criteria to help teams think critically about their choices.

Choosing Focus Standards[2]

Focus standards are a subset of the entire list of state performance standards that are absolutely essential to content mastery in your subject. The content they represent must **endure** beyond one lesson or question on a state test. The content must be of **high leverage,** meaning that success on other standards is dependent on it. And the knowledge gained from the standard is a **prerequisite for succeeding in the next grade**.[3]

Most grade level teams will often select no more than ten focus standards to target during the year. This does not mean that the other standards are not taught or are not important. Simply, by choosing focus standards teachers are saying that this is the essential knowledge on which they will focus the bulk of their energy during the year in lesson plans and assessments. It is the knowledge that they agree that students will need to succeed in the following year. These standards should be aligned across grade levels and support students as they advance.

[2] Focus Standards are the same as Key Standards in Math, A Standards in History, or Priority Standards in other subjects. Focus standards refer to the high leverage standards which should receive priority during instruction.
[3] Reeves, D. (2002). *The leader's guide to standards: A blueprint for educational equity and excellence.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Backwards Planning

Having chosen the standards to emphasize throughout the year, the next step is mapping them out in units: deciding *when* to teach them during the year, *how long* to spend teaching them, and *what* resources will be needed to teach them. Grade level departments should consult district pacing guides and blueprints[4] when creating curriculum maps. More backwards mapping resources at listed at the end of this chapter.

Identifying Learning Targets

Once long term planning is complete, it is time to start thinking about the individual lessons that will help students master the content in the plan. Each lesson should have a specific **learning target** that is a subset of a larger standard.[5] For example:

- *I can use dialogue to develop characters in my stories.*
- *I can use the distributive property to solve single variable equations.*

Make sure that learning targets are written in simple student-friendly language that is easy to understand. This is important because students need to know from the beginning what it is that they are supposed to be learning and why. Without stating expectations up front, students may come to class everyday and assume that they are learning but feel no real responsibility for the content because teachers are doing most of the work.

Teachers can effectively hold students accountable for learning by stating the objective for learning up front (describing the learning targets they expect students to master in the unit) and then giving individual students clear and specific feedback about their performance after each lesson. Without the learning target stated clearly, it is harder to give useful feedback and students are less likely to improve.

Teachers should use daily formative assessments to monitor class proficiency mastering daily objective. Formative assessments can include call and response, independent practice work, short answer or multiple choice questions. *(For more ideas about how to assess in the moment, please refer to Chapter 4.)*

Setting Clear and Accessible Learning Goals

If students are clear about what they are supposed to learn, then they can be more meta-cognitive about their learning process. By paying attention to what is difficult and what is easy, students can then use that information to ask for help and design a useful learning plan.

Creating a plan that outlines concrete steps students can follow to achieve success helps them take ownership and assume control over their own learning. Over time, you will find that students who set goals and evaluate and monitor their own performance will set higher standards

[4] These are available on the OUSD website. Click on the "teacher" tab and then click the subject specific tab.
[5] Well-written learning targets are student friendly, verb appropriate, content specific, and standard-based. "Verb appropriate" means that what students are asked to do falls into one of the following categories: knowledge, skill, reasoning, or application. (Stiggins, Rick. Classroom Assessment FOR Student Learning: Doing it Right-Using it Well. Prentice Hall 2007)

for themselves, try harder, and take more risks because their self-motivation increases.[6]

Below are some samples of student developed goals and their respective measures of success.

- Student Goal: *"I will get a 19 out of 20 on my spelling tests 3 times in a row."*
  - Accountability and self-monitoring: The student saves the tests in a folder at home, staples the tests together when the goal has been accomplished, and brings them to school.
- Student Goal: *"I will read 1 chapter book by the end of the month."*
  - Accountability and self-monitoring: The student illustrates a scene from the book that includes the major characters and lists the book's title and the author/illustrator.
- Student Goal: *"I will learn how to build a kite this summer."*
  - Accountability and self-monitoring: The student writes step-by-step instructions describing how he built the kite, shows the kite to his classmates, and gives them copies of his written instructions.

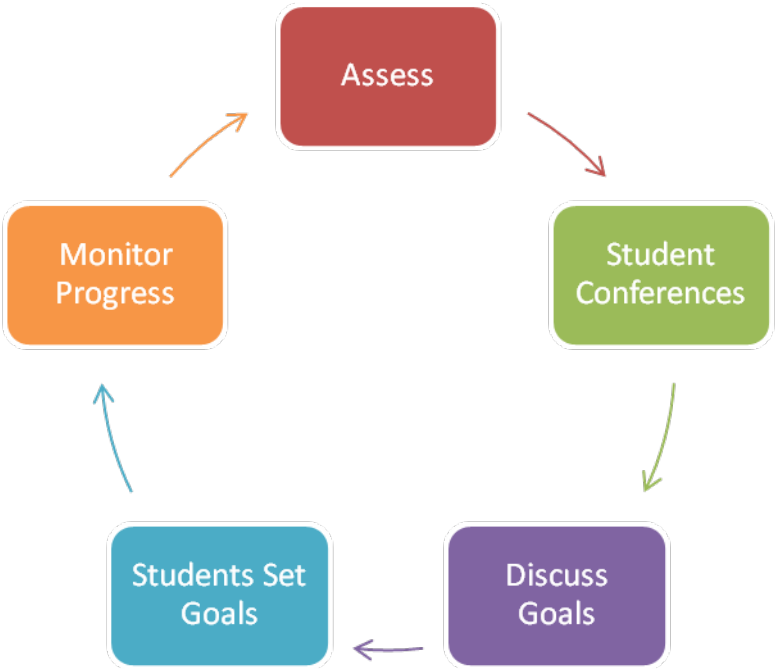
[6] Wang, M.C., Haertel, G.D., & Walberg, H.J. (1994, January). Synthesis of research: What helps students learn? *Educational Leadership*, 51(4), 74-79.

Chapter 2 Resources

Student Goal Setting Process

Students need their teacher's help to set appropriate goals. Below is a proposed process for working with students to create meaningful and rigorous goals.

1. **Assess** – You must know what your students know and don't know before you can help them set goals about what they are going to learn.
2. **Student Conferences** – After assessing students, meet with them to review their performance on the assessment. Start the conversation by asking the student how they felt about the exam. Then discuss strengths and weaknesses, show examples of student work on the exam. Finally discuss options for target areas for the student.
3. **Discuss Goals** – Teach students how to write SMART Goals. Practice writing sample goals, and then have them write SMART Goals for their work in the class. This can be done as a whole class activity or as part of the conference.
4. **Students Set Goals** – Students need to write their goals down. Goals can be posted in the classroom or in a notebook. The goal(s) and the strategies need to be visible and regularly reviewed. Use the flow chart below to help facilitate the conversation.
5. **Monitor Progress** – Students need to monitor their own progress. There should be opportunities for students to track their progress and retake assessments to show their progress.



My Goals by (Student Name) _____

I know:

I want to work on:

My Goal is:

My Target Date is:

To Reach My Goal I will do these 3 things.

1.

2.

3.

HANDOUT SBL-K1.1
An Overview of Standards-Based Instructional Planning

Step 10: Plan the Lesson
Select the best method for delivering content. How will you open and close the lesson? Which High Impact Teaching Strategies (HITS) will you use? How will students practice the material?

Step 9: Detail How You Will Assess the Lesson Objectives Generated in Step 8
Create assessments that will allow you to judge whether or not students are mastering lesson objectives.

Step 8: Include Appropriate Cognitive Levels in the Objectives
Use Bloom's Taxonomy to write lesson objectives that include both higher- and lower-order thinking skills, as appropriate.

Step 7: Write Lesson Objectives that Are Clear, Measurable and Framed in Terms of Student Learning
Remember it often takes several lesson objectives to address a single standard. Ensure that the lesson objectives created in the units from Step 6 are linked to the standards you reviewed while developing your long-term plan.

Step 6: Sequence Units on a Calendar to Develop a Yearlong Instructional Plan
Sequence the units developed in Step 5 on a calendar. This document is called a year-long or long-term plan. The plan is a working document, not a fixed syllabus. The plan should help you forecast what students will learn next, areas to re-teach, and opportunities for test preparation.

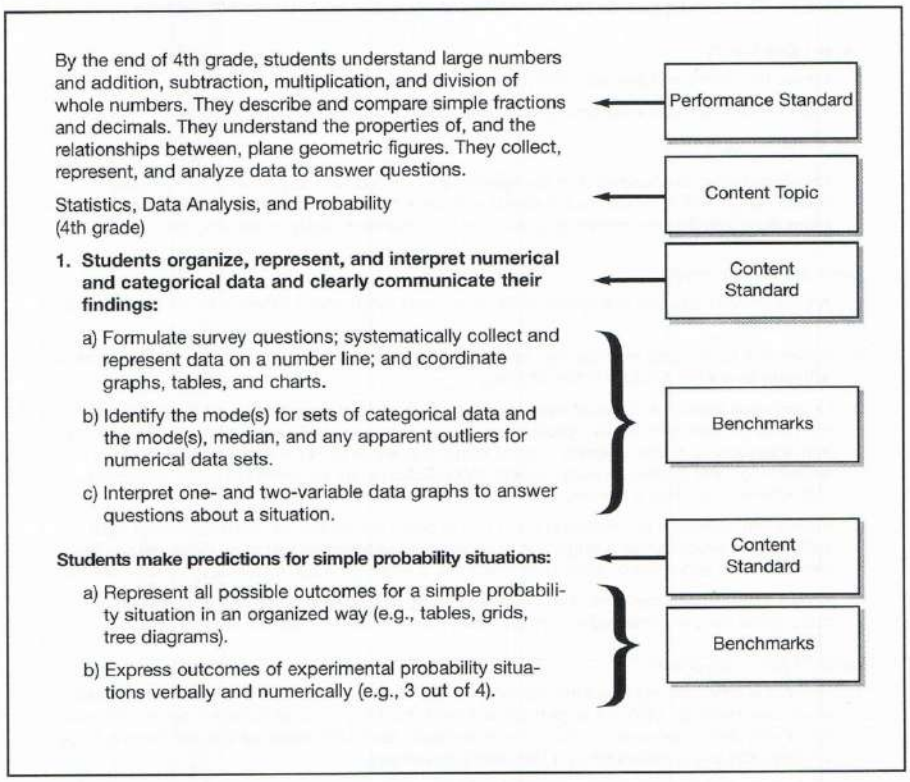
Step 5: Cluster Standards and Benchmarks into Units
Group the standards based on a goal, theme, or concept. Focus on choosing and addressing the standards for which the student's performance does not meet expectations, as indicated by diagnostic data. Continue grouping standards until you have addressed those that students are expected to know.

Step 4: Use Diagnostics to Inform Unit Planning
Review students' prior assessment data and/or create short assessments to determine current performance level on the standards related to the unit you're developing.

Step 3: Determine Frequently Tested Standards
Become familiar with the assessments used to test students' mastery of grade level standards. Take the tests yourself, and try to match the test questions back to the standards you reviewed in Step 1.

Step 2: Consult District Curriculum Guides
Some districts map out the standards for a grade level or subject area. These long-term plans are called pacing guides or curriculum maps, and they will assist you with planning. If your district does not map these out for you, you should do so yourself.

Step 1: Review National and/or State Standards
Usually standards documents can be found on the district website. Concentrate on the standards for your grade level. Your goal is to get a broad idea of what students are expected to learn.


By the end of 4th grade, students understand large numbers and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers. They describe and compare simple fractions and decimals. They understand the properties of, and the relationships between, plane geometric figures. They collect, represent, and analyze data to answer questions.
Performance Standard
Statistics, Data Analysis, and Probability
(4th grade)
Content Topic
1. Students organize, represent, and interpret numerical and categorical data and clearly communicate their findings:
Content Standard
a) Formulate survey questions; systematically collect and represent data on a number line; and coordinate graphs, tables, and charts.
b) Identify the mode(s) for sets of categorical data and the mode(s), median, and any apparent outliers for numerical data sets.
c) Interpret one- and two-variable data graphs to answer questions about a situation.
Benchmarks
Students make predictions for simple probability situations:
Content Standard
a) Represent all possible outcomes for a simple probability situation in an organized way (e.g., tables, grids, tree diagrams).
b) Express outcomes of experimental probability situations verbally and numerically (e.g., 3 out of 4).
Benchmarks

Standards Aligned Planning Template

OUSD Instructional Services: English/Language Arts

UNIT OVERVIEW			
UNIT TITLE		GRADE LEVEL	
SUBJECT/TOPIC			
UNIT LENGTH		MARKING PERIOD	
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS			
STANDARDS INTRODUCED			
STANDARDS TAUGHT TO MASTERY			
UNIT ASSESSMENTS			
ASSIGNMENTS AND PROJECTS	•	MAJOR WRITING COMPONENTS	•
PRIMARY TEACHING MATERIALS			
OTHER RESOURCES			

UNIT CALENDAR					
WEEK 1					
WEEK 2					
WEEK 3					

Standards Aligned Planning Template
OUSD Instructional Services: English/Language Arts

LESSON PLAN: (title and length of lesson)						
Defining Success	**STANDARDS:** State or District Tested Standards			**STANDARDS:** Non-Tested District Essential		
	DECLARATIVE OBJECTIVES: **What will your students know by the end of the lesson?**		**PROCEDURAL OBJECTIVES:** What will your students be able to do by the end of the lesson?		**DISPOSITIONAL OBJECTIVES:** Which habits of behavior or mind will your students develop in this lesson?	
	ASSESSMENT: **How will you know concretely that all of your students have mastered the objective?**					
	KEY POINTS: **What main ideas or steps will you emphasize in your lesson?**					

	MATERIALS:	
	OPENING: How will you focus, prepare and engage students for the lesson's objective?	
	INTRODUCTION OF NEW MATERIAL: How will you convey the knowledge and/or skills of the lesson? What will your students be doing to process this information?	

esson Cycle		
	GUIDED PRACTICE: In what ways will your learners attempt to explain or do what you have outlined? How will you monitor and coach their performance?	
	INDEPENDENT PRACTICE: In what ways will your different learners attempt the objective on their own? How will you gauge mastery?	
	CLOSING: How will you have students summarize what they've learned? How will you reinforce the objective's importance and its link to past and future learning?	

DIFFERENTIATION		
Who are the learners in your classroom?	Which specific students fall into each category?	What will you do to meet the needs of these students in this lesson?

LESSON #: TITLE		
Standard:		
Materials Needed:		
APPROX. TIME	**LESSON COMPONENT**	**STUDENT ACTIVITIES & PRODUCTS (journals, organizers, discussions, assessments, etc.)**
	DO NOW	
	LESSON OPENER	
	INPUT/MODEL	
	STRUCTURED GUIDED PRACTICE	
	CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING	
	STUDENT PRACTICE	
	REACHING A CONSENSUS	
	PRESENTATION	
	CLOSURE	
	PREVIEW	

Daily Lesson Plan
Level, Unit and Day:

Student Friendly Objectives (what will be learned and assessed today)
1. I can… 2. I can… 3. I can…

Time:	Opening **(Warm Up, Do Now, CA, Review Objectives, etc.)**	
Time:	Preparing / Building Background **(complete all that apply)**	**Links to Knowledge/ Experience (prior or newly constructed)**
		Links to Prior Learning
		Key vocabulary and/or sentence structure/ grammatical form ***(what is the key vocab. and how will you introduce/ contextualize it?. E.g. Sentence frames, language pattern charts, sentence construction charts…)***
Time:	Presentation-Direct Instruction **(modeling, directions, demonstration, etc.)**	
Time:	Interacting with Concept **(including activities, tasks, group/individual practice, feedback)**	
Time:	Extending **(application of concept)**	
Time:	Review / Assessment	
Time:	Closing **(including wrap up and reflection on objectives)**	

Chapter 3:

How will we know when each student has mastered the essential learning?

Topics
- Setting Norms For Data Analysis
- A Framework For Data Analysis
- Analyzing Data
- Planning Instruction Based on Data Analysis
- Analyzing Authentic Work
- Reflecting on the Results
- Communicating Results to Students
- Creating Common Formative Assessments

There are many ways to determine whether or not our students have met our expectations for learning. District benchmark results, written essays, notes from oral presentations, and classroom observations are just a few examples of information we collect daily about students. Any and all of these can help us determine what a student has or has not learned.

After teams choose their focus standards, they will need to decide what they consider to be evidence of mastery. If this is their first time working together and they don't have a formal or experienced facilitator, the easiest data set to examine are the results from a recent district benchmark. If, however, your teachers are experienced and are used to collaborating, they may want to use data from their own assessments.

On the next few pages are tips on analyzing the data from different kinds of assessments and instructions on how to create your own assessments should you choose to do so.

Setting Norms For Data Analysis

Before beginning with the skill aspect of data analysis, it is important to state a few norms up front. First:

- *We gather and analyze data for the purpose of gaining insight into student needs that will help us make more **strategic**, **efficient,** and **deliberate** instructional decisions.*

As we analyze data to determine whether or not students have learned what we taught them ("results"), the process of inquiry should teach *us* something about ourselves and students that will help us as educators do our job better. To approach data with this mindset will help us weather the disappointments we may experience when our students do not perform as we may have wished or expected.

The second important norm is:

- *A student's results reflect a **moment** in time.*

A student's scores on a particular assessment do not determine his/her overall ability. Each student has the capacity to change a level or score at any time. The "result" is not a fixed, immutable label.

It is important to remember this as we analyze data because it will become more and more tempting to refer to students as "Below Basics" or "Far Below Basics" if their scores remain the same over time. But if a student's results do not change, it is not because they cannot, it is because we have not yet figured out how. Being conscious of the language that we use to describe their results helps us to remember that our work is not yet done.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly:

- ***No one data point can tell us all we need to know about a student***.

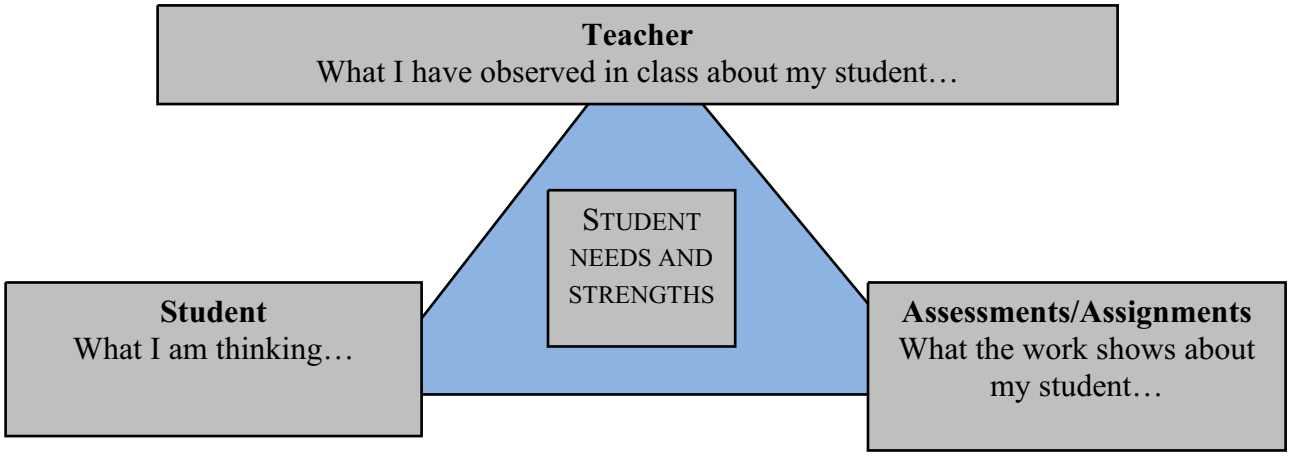
Each source of data provides us with different information about a student that can be useful as we try to figure out how to best teach him/her. So it is important to have multiple and varied data points throughout the year.

It's a common misconception to assume this means more formal assessments. However, teachers have a wealth of information from having observed a student all day in class. The student, himself, is a valuable but often neglected source.

Each source answers a different question and if examined in tandem can offer valuable insight about how best to modify instruction to meet a student's needs.

A Framework for Data Analysis

There are three important sources at your disposal for data for analysis: you, your students, and assessments or assignments.

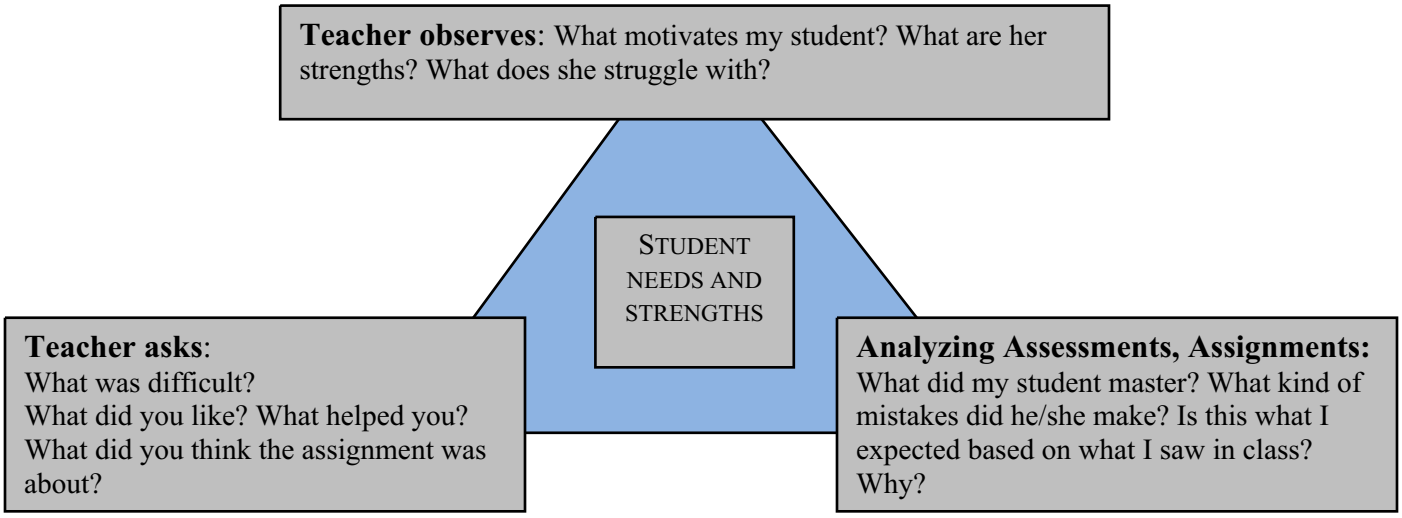


An example of how the three sources can work together…

In class you may have noticed that Katia's eyes really light up when you talk about farming, but she shuts down when you ask her to do a math problem in her head on the spot. You also notice that her illustrations in science are very detailed. Through this brief observation, you have been able to determine what motivates her (science), what she struggles with (math), and one of her strengths (detailed drawings).

Say you then took it a step further and actually asked her about your observations. You learned that in Mexico her family had a garden and she knows a lot about how to grow vegetables. She, in fact, knows a lot about cross-pollination and grafting plants. When you ask her about your observation over her during Math, she tells you she gets nervous when you call on her and her mind "goes blank". With this information, you decide to give Katia an opportunity to present some of her drawings to the class. You know that giving her the opportunity to present herself as a knowledgeable and competent "expert" will help build her confidence and help her take more risks as a learner. To help her increase her math fluency, you give her some timed problems that she can practice on her own quietly in an emotionally safe space.

In this scenario the teacher *noticed* the child's strengths, *asked* about them in order to confirm them and to learn more, and used formal assignments to measure performance (oral presentation and timed math problems). Below are some questions you can ask yourself when trying to maximize the information you get from each source.



The scenario described above almost comes as second nature to the majority of seasoned master teachers. However, it can take years to internalize the process and it often feels different when examining standardized data. Don't be fooled! The process of analyzing any kind of data is the same and with practice can be applied to any context.

Analyzing Data

Regardless of the source, there are always two questions you can ask yourself when examining ANY data:

1. *What patterns do I notice in my students' achievement?*
2. *What can I learn about myself and about what my students need by analyzing this data?*

These are the questions that form the basis of most data analysis protocols. Try answering the questions using the Class List Report.

Class List Report for:
Exam: ELA- Fall Multiple Choice- Grade 2 (Adm1-2008/2009)

August 2, 2009

Report Options

Schools:
Grades: All
Teachers: All
Courses: All
Gender: All

Ed Programs: All
Ethnicities: All
Custom Groups: All
Roster: 2008-2009 School Year, Spring, Summer
 # Students: 20

Student Performance

Student	Overall Performance		Grade Two Reading: 1.1 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 1, 2, 3, 4) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 1.2 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 5, 6, 7, 8) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 1.7 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 21, 22, 23) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 1.8 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 18, 19, 20) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 2.1 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 12, 13, 14) (3 pts. possible)	
GROUP AVERAGE	**Approachin**	**20(51.19%)**	**Below**	**1.4(46.20%)**	**Below**	**1.4(45.03%)**	**At or Above**	**2.5(84.21%)**	**Below**	**1.7(57.89%)**	**Below**	**1.9(61.99%)**
Iris	Above	36(92.31%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Hugo	Approaching	23(58.97%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Jordan	Below	17(43.59%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)
Lizbeth	Below	17(43.59%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	1(33.33%)
Daniel	Above	34(87.18%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Olive	Approaching	21(53.85%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Brandon	Benchmark	30(76.92%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Clifton	Below	7(17.95%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)
Connie	Benchmark	28(71.79%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Dennis	Approaching	27(69.23%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Tahir	Below	10(25.64%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Camila	Below	16(41.03%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	1(33.33%)
Tineleti	Above	35(89.74%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Bladimiro	Below	9(23.08%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	0(0.00%)
Jose	Below	12(30.77%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Itary	Below	11(28.21%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)
Angel	Approaching	23(58.97%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Ja'Meisha	Approaching	26(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Jenifer	Approaching	20(51.28%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Simon	Approaching	23(58.97%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)

One possible answer for question #1*: 18/20 students mastered Reading 1.7. That was the only standard where I met my goal of getting at least 70% of my class at Proficiency.*

One possible answer for question #2: *When I examine "overall performance", I notice that 5 out of the 8 students that were Below Benchmark overall, scored at or above benchmark on Reading 1.7. What are all the possible reasons that they were able to do well on this standard despite their challenges on all of the rest?*

In Edusoft there are three main reports that can give you different "slices" of student performance results. You already worked with one (Class List Report included above.) Now let's examine another kind.

(Cont.) # of	Readi	Reading--1.2				Reading--1.7			Reading--1.8			Reading--2.1			Reading--3.1			Reading--3.4		
Question #	1:4	1:5	1:6	1:7	1:8	1:21	1:22	1:23	1:18	1:19	1:20	1:12	1:13	1:14	1:9	1:10	1:11	1:15	1:16	1:17
% of Correct	53%	84%	51%	46%	39%	88%	86%	79%	51%	75%	47%	70%	56%	60%	33%	51%	54%	56%	46%	49%
Total Points Possible	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Correct Response	B	C	D	D	B	A	B	A	C	D	D	B	C	A	D	A	B	C	B	B
Student Name											-									
Iris	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√
Hugo	√	√	√	A	A	√	√	√	√	√	B	√	√	√	√	√	D	√	√	√
Jordan	A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	B	√	B	A	A	C	A	B	D	√	√	D
Lizbeth	√	√	A	√	A	√	A	√	B	√	B	√	D	B	C	√	√	√	√	A
Daniel	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	C	C
Olive	A	D	A	√	A	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	C	C	√	B	C	√
Brandon	√	√	√	C	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Clifton	√	B	B	A	C	√	A	D	A	A	A	√	A	C	A	D	C	A	D	√
Connie	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√
Dennis	√	√	√	B	√	√	√	√	B	√	√	√	√	D	√	√	√	√	√	A
Tahir	A	√	A	B	A	√	√	√	B	A	√	√	√	√	A	√	A	B	D	C
Camila	D	√	B	C	C	√	√	√	B	√	B	D	√	D	A	C	A	D	√	C
Tineleti	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	C	√
Bladimiro	A	√	A	B	√	B	C	B	√	A	√	C	A	D	C	√	A	B	A	D
Jose	D	√	B	A	A	D	√	√	A	B	B	√	√	B	A	C	D	A	C	√
Itary	A	√	A	B	A	√	√	√	A	B	C	D	D	B	A	B	√	A	√	C
Angel	C	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	B	√	C	D	√	√	√
Ja'Meisha	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	B	C	C
Jenifer	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	A	√	C	√	√	C	√	√	√	√	√	D
Simon	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	A	C	D	√	√	A

The Item Response Report allows teachers to identify common mistakes and student misconceptions. The following are a list of questions which staff could ask when analyzing student performance using these reports.

1. What items did the majority of my students get correct? Did they get the majority correct on any given standard?
2. What items did my students get incorrect? Did they have any common misconceptions? (Look back at the specific test questions.) Why might they have chosen the answer that they did? (Think about: vocabulary, concepts, or assumed background knowledge.)

3. What can we learn about ourselves and what students need by analyzing the work they have completed?

Possible answers #1:

- *The majority of my students (60% or above) got items 5, 21, 22, 23, 19, 12, and 14 correct. (See 2nd row, 1:X, X is the question number.)*
- *The majority (60% or above) of students got ALL of the items correct on Reading Standard 1.7 and got the majority (2 out of 3) items correct on Reading Standard 2.1.*

Possible answers #2: *The majority of my students (less that 50% correct) got 7, 8, 20, 9, 16, 17 incorrect. I notice that on both items 8 and 9 the majority of my students answered "A".*

Possible answers #3 *When I go back to look at the test, I notice that in both items 8 and 9 the choice for "A" was the only word my students had seen before. The other choices were words they are not familiar with. Yet if they had known some of the roots, they could have figured it out. Maybe I need to spend more time on word work…*

Planning Instruction Based on Data Analysis

The information about the % of students at or above benchmark on each standard can most easily be extracted from the Performance Band Report. When you want a quick summary of the results, this report provides the best view.

Below are some examples of how you can use information from all three reports to plan instruction.

Performance Band Report for:
Exam: ELA- Fall Multiple Choice- Grade 2 (Adm1-2008/2009)

August 02, 2009 Page 1 of 2

Report Options:

Schools:		Grades:	All
Courses:	All	Gender:	All
Teachers:	All	Ethnicities:	All
Custom Groups:	All	Ed Programs:	All
# Students:	20	Roster:	2008-2009 School Year, Spring, Summer

Overall Performance:

Percent of students at **Benchmark** or above:

18%

Average Score: 20.0/39 (51%)

Per Band Performance:

Band	Range	# Students	%
Below	0.00-19.49	26	46%
Approaching	19.50-27.29	21	37%
Benchmark	27.30-33.14	6	11%
Above	33.15-39.0	4	7%

Per Standard Performance:

Standard	Below Benchmark	At or Above Benchmark
Reading: 1.1	29 (51%)	28 (49%)
Reading: 1.2	32 (56%)	25 (44%)
Reading: 1.7	8 (14%)	49 (86%)
Reading: 1.8	22 (39%)	35 (61%)
Reading: 2.1	20 (35%)	37 (65%)
Reading: 3.1	30 (53%)	27 (47%)
Reading: 3.4	28 (49%)	29 (51%)
Writing: 1.1	35 (61%)	22 (39%)
Writing: 1.4	39 (68%)	18 (32%)
Language Conventions: 1.3	29 (51%)	28 (49%)
Language Conventions: 1.4	33 (58%)	24 (42%)
Language Conventions: 1.7	28 (49%)	29 (51%)
Language Conventions: 1.8	30 (53%)	27 (47%)

Summarizing Performance Band Reports

In this class, the majority (more than 50%) of the students achieved mastery on only 5 standards: R 1.7, R 1.8, R2.1, R3.4, L.C. 1.7

"*As a teacher, I had set my goal at having at least 70% of my students master each standard. Only one standard, R1.7, met that criteria. My students came close to meeting the goal on other standards but didn't quite make it. I wonder who is still struggling*?"

Class List Report for:
Exam: ELA- Fall Multiple Choice- Grade 2 (Adm1-2008/2009)

August 2, 2009

Report Options

Schools:
Grades: All
Teachers: All
Courses: All
Gender: All

Ed Programs: All
Ethnicities: All
Custom Groups: All
Roster: 2008-2009 School Year, Spring, Summer
 # Students: 20

Student Performance

Student	Overall Performance		Grade Two Reading: 1.1 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 1, 2, 3, 4) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 1.2 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 5, 6, 7, 8) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 1.7 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 21, 22, 23) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 1.8 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 18, 19, 20) (3 pts. possible)		Grade Two Reading: 2.1 (Section 1 - Multiple Choice: 12, 13, 14) (3 pts. possible)	
GROUP AVERAGE	Approachin	20(51.19%)	Below	1.4(46.20%)	Below	1.4(45.03%)	At or Above	2.5(84.21%)	Below	1.7(57.89%)	Below	1.9(61.99%)
Iris	Above	36(92.31%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Hugo	Approaching	23(58.97%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Jordan	Below	17(43.59%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)
Lizbeth	Below	17(43.59%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	1(33.33%)
Daniel	Above	34(87.18%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Olive	Approaching	21(53.85%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Brandon	Benchmark	30(76.92%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Clifton	Below	7(17.95%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)
Connie	Benchmark	28(71.79%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Dennis	Approaching	27(69.23%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Tahir	Below	10(25.64%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Camila	Below	16(41.03%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	1(33.33%)
Tineleti	Above	35(89.74%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Bladimiro	Below	9(23.08%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	0(0.00%)
Jose	Below	12(30.77%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Itary	Below	11(28.21%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)	Below	0(0.00%)
Angel	Approaching	23(58.97%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Ja'Meisha	Approaching	26(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)
Jenifer	Approaching	20(51.28%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	Below	1(33.33%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)
Simon	Approaching	23(58.97%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	3(100.00%)	At or Above	2(66.67%)

Looking at ONLY those standards where students met or almost met the performance goal that the teacher had set, we can see from the Class List Report that on standard R1.7, two students did not meet the criteria for mastery: Clifton and Bladimiro. On standard R1.8, eight students did not make benchmark: Jordan, Lizbeth, Clifton, Tahir, Camila, Jose, Itary and Jennifer. On standard R2.1, 6 students did not meet the standard: Jordan, Lizbeth, Clifton, Camila, Bladimiro, Itary.

Students	Standard R1.7	Standard R1.8	Standard R 2.1
Clifton	x	x	x
Bladimiro	x		x
Jordan		x	x
Lizbeth		x	x
Tahir		x	
Camila		x	x
Jose		x	
Itary		x	x
Jennifer		x	

"If I target these students for re-teaching and intervention, I can meet the goal I set! Hmm…but I am worried about Clifton, he doesn't seem to be getting what the other kids are grasping at all…I need to look into getting more resources for him."

"O.k. now I need to figure out what to focus on with the students NOT on this list…Did they master all of the focus standards I on which I chose to target my instruction this 6 weeks?"

Reading standard 1.1	*Got it!*	*Didn't get it…*
Iris	*x*	
Hugo	*x*	
Daniel	*x*	
Olive		*x*
Connie	*x*	
Dennis	*x*	
Tineleti		*x*
Angel		*x*
Simon	*x*	

"Who from the other list didn't get it? Bladimiro, Jordan, Olive, Tahir, Lomeli, Jose, Itary, Jennifer. Wow! That's more than half of my class…I wonder how my grade level partner's kids did on this. If half of her kids didn't get it either maybe we can combine them and take turns teaching them."

"I still need to find a standard for Iris, Hugo, Daniel, Connie, Dennis, and Simon to work on…but I have lunch duty now so I guess it will have to wait."

The point of this example is to show that a teacher cannot reteach everything. They can not "focus" on *everything.* To focus, teachers need to make some choices. In this example, the teacher chose to focus her analysis both on the goals she had set for mastery and the key standards that had been agreed to as a grade level at the start of the year.

"*I am back from lunch and I have forty five minutes of prep. I can either come up with activities for Iris, Daniel, Connie, Dennis, and Simon to work on or I can make sure that the standards I chose for the other groups are right. I think I'll focus on that…Where did I put that assessment? I need it to make sense of this Item Response Report."*

(Cont.) # of	Readi	Reading--1.2				Reading--1.7			Reading--1.8			Reading--2.1			Reading--3.1			Reading--3.4		
Question #	1:4	1:5	1:6	1:7	1:8	1:21	1:22	1:23	1:18	1:19	1:20	1:12	1:13	1:14	1:9	1:10	1:11	1:15	1:16	1:17
% of Correct	53%	84%	51%	46%	39%	88%	86%	79%	51%	75%	47%	70%	56%	60%	33%	51%	54%	56%	46%	49%
Total Points Possible	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Correct Response	B	C	D	D	B	A	B	A	C	D	D	B	C	A	D	A	B	C	B	B
Student Name											-									
Iris	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√
Hugo	√	√	√	A	A	√	√	√	√	√	B	√	√	√	√	√	D	√	√	√
Jordan	A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	B	√	B	A	A	C	A	B	D	√	√	D
Lizbeth	√	√	A	√	A	√	A	√	B	√	B	√	D	B	C	√	√	√	√	A
Daniel	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	C	C
Olive	A	D	A	√	A	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	C	C	√	B	C	√
Brandon	√	√	√	C	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Clifton	√	B	B	A	C	√	A	D	A	A	A	√	A	C	A	D	C	A	D	√
Connie	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√
Dennis	√	√	√	B	√	√	√	√	B	√	√	√	√	D	√	√	√	√	√	A
Tahir	A	√	A	B	A	√	√	√	B	A	√	√	√	√	A	√	A	B	D	C
Camila	D	√	B	C	C	√	√	√	B	√	B	D	√	D	A	C	A	D	√	C
Tineleti	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	C	√
Bladimiro	A	√	A	B	√	B	C	B	√	A	√	C	A	D	C	√	A	B	A	D
Jose	D	√	B	A	A	D	√	√	A	B	B	√	√	B	A	C	D	A	C	√
Itary	A	√	A	B	A	√	√	√	A	B	C	D	D	B	A	B	√	A	√	C
Angel	C	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	B	√	C	D	√	√	√
Ja'Meisha	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	B	C	C
Jenifer	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	√	A	√	C	√	√	C	√	√	√	√	√	D
Simon	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	A	√	√	A	C	D	√	√	A

"*Here it is! O.k. On standard R1.8 the kids missed items 18 and 20. The kids all choose "B". By looking at the original test, I can see that both of those items had to do with conjugating the verb "to be". Oh that's easy! I have just the game for them to set up at center time*."

"*Next I will look at Standard 2.1 Hmm, no clear patterns in the choices, the kids must not get this at all…but some of them did. I wonder why? Maybe I can ask the kids who understood the questions to explain it to those that didn't…"*

"Last standard, I am almost done. Reading 1.1 (not pictured here but the process would be the same…) *Yippee! I am done planning. No wait. I still have to find something for Iris, Daniel, Connie, Dennis, and Simon to work on. Darn! I always have that problem…good thing my principal gave me that article on differentiation that she got at some district thing. Maybe I'll look at it tonight…"*

From this example, you can see that analyzing data doesn't have to be difficult. It requires time, a focus, and later, an opportunity to share and test out ideas with others.

Analyzing Authentic Work

If the data you were examining had come from an authentic piece of work, you might ask yourself:

- *In what area did my students meet my standard for quality?*
- *What kinds of mistakes do they keep making over and over again?*

General questions to ask when analyzing EITHER test results OR authentic work:

- What concept/skills do my students seem to understand? What concept/skill do my students NOT understand but I feel should?
- Is there anything I did in class that might have led to this misconception? What is one thing I can do in class to clear up this misconception?
- Are the standards my students did best on the ones I spent the most time on in class? What do I need to re-teach? To whom?

Reflecting on the Results of Your Data Analysis in PLCs

There is a difference between using data to *plan* instruction and using data to *modify* instruction. Using benchmark data to identify standards you would like to reteach to the whole class or to small groups is an example of using data to plan instruction. Using CST results or End of Year Benchmark results at the start of the year to decide who you want to target for interventions is also an example of using data to plan instruction.

However, when through the process of strategically and conscientiously analyzing data, you begin to ask yourself new and challenging questions that fundamentally changes your practice—that is modifying instruction. For example, say that you continually get results that show you that your students are not meeting benchmark. Through dialogue with your colleagues, you begin to question whether a practice you have considered to be your hallmark is really meeting the needs of your students. You decide it is not and choose to let it go. This is an example of using data to modify instruction.

This deep awareness of the connection between professional strengths and student needs becomes richer through dialogue with other equally passionate and committed individuals. Below is an example of how conversations between teachers become more powerful with continued practice and shared norms. Your will also find a sample data analysis protocol to be used with district standards-based multiple choice assessments (courtesy of Learning without Limits) to help teachers who are just beginning to analyze data become more comfortable looking at it and talking about it with each other.

Increasing the depth of the conversation

Data conversations are challenging. Educators bring many pre-conceived notions about assessment and data, and often feel threatened when forced to look at their own practice and its impact.

Effective conversations are those guided by a skilled facilitator who respectfully guides the discussion towards analyzing results, finding patterns, and making plans for how to address the results and patterns. These conversations are never easy, but they are critical to implementing a data driven school and ultimately improving student performance. Below is an example of an effective data conversation.

> *We had been working on writing and weren't really sure about what to teach next. The scoring rubric we used to assess each student's essay was very broad. Karen suggested that we identify sub skills within each writing component and develop our own rubric for evaluating just one component. When we rescored our essays using our new diagnostic tool, we found that of our 20 focus students, one student scored a 4 (out of 5), 16 students scored between a 1 and a 3, and three students didn't even score a 1.*
>
> *Because the students had such different learning needs we decided to group them by their scores on each of the three subskills: controlling idea, supporting detail, logical development and sequencing. Some students, depending on their score, only had to work on one learning target. Other students had to work on all 3 subskills.*

For a team that has just started working together or has trust issues (meaning that the teachers within the group have widely different perspectives about practice), the conversation will be more superficial and less detailed:

> *We wanted to know what a student needs to know and be able to do to pass the district benchmark. One teacher who had taught the grade before thought that students get stuck on the graphs. We decided to do an item analysis to see if her hunch was correct and it was. We realized that we never really teach graphs so we brainstormed some ideas for lessons.*

Both conversations helped teachers address gaps in student learning. However, the first group went one step further and began to differentiate their approach. That team also assumed collective responsibility for all students. The 20 focus students were clearly shared. We can't tell from the conversation how many were in each class. In the second scenario, it's not clear what strategy the teachers decided upon or if they all committed to trying the same thing. In scenario #2 although teachers "collaborate", they are still basically functioning as independent contractors.

To reach the level of conversation described in scenario #1, the following conditions had to be in place:

1) shared agreement about the task (what they were there to do)
2) clear norms for how to work with each other (no judgment or blame)
3) a skilled facilitator and/or experience looking at student work

In addition, these teachers knew what questions they had about themselves and the work *before* going into the conversation.

Any teacher team can achieve these levels of trust and focus but you need to be deliberate and explicit about creating the conditions that make these kinds of conversations possible. In Chapter 3 we provide some guidance.

Communicating Results to Students

In addition to having conversations with each other after assessments have been administered, it is important that teachers also have a conversation with students about their results. Even though time constraints make it tempting to just give students their "score", doing so will not help them improve. To get better, students need high quality, descriptive feedback on their assessment performance.

<u>High quality feedback</u>:

- Describes features of work and performance
- Relates directly to focus standards and objectives
- Points out strengths and provides information on how to improve upon weaknesses
- Shows students the difference between strong and weak work

This means looking at specific items/problems with students and helping them pinpoint their mistakes. It also means helping children notice and describe their own thought process.

As Paul Black and Dylan Williams write in their Phi Delta Kappan article, "Inside the Black Box." (1998)- "*When anyone is trying to learn, feedback about the effort has three elements: recognizing the desired goal, evidence about the present position, and some understanding of a way to close the gap between the two".*

When you take the time to give clear feedback, you communicate the power and value of effort. Over time, students who receive high quality feedback consistently will begin to anticipate and welcome feedback because they know it means that they will have an opportunity to do better when they try again. More importantly, high quality feedback helps students zero in on what is within their control helping to build their resiliency for the intellectual risk-taking required in learning.

Creating Common Formative Assessments

More experienced groups, those who have worked together for a while and/or have more time to meet, may want to create their own assessments in addition to district benchmarks. To begin, ensure that each question included on an assessment is aligned to a focus standard and is appropriate for the grade level of your students. Questions that do not address focus standards may provide extraneous data and questions that are not at grade level may provide misleading information.

When assessing for student mastery of standards using multiple choice questions, make sure to include at least 3 questions aligned to each standard. In general, it is recommended to include 3-6 questions depending on the complexity of the standard and the desired length of the assessment. It is not possible to determine standards-mastery based on 1 or 2 questions because students may have guessed correctly or made a careless mistake and answered incorrectly.

Pay attention to the clarity of language and vocabulary for each assessment item, particularly through the lens of an EL student. Does the assessment have unnecessary cultural references? Are questions largely language dependent (is the assessment just testing their knowledge of the English language)? Does the assessment use high-frequency vocabulary words or words that might be unfamiliar to many students?[7] For example, "ice cream" would be a more familiar word than "popsicle."

Assessment Questions

There are a variety of different question types that can be included in an assessment: multiple choice, short answer, true/false, or essay. Each type has its own advantages and disadvantages as outlined in the attached resources. In general, it is best to assess students in a variety of ways to determine content mastery.

[7] Almeida, Lisa. Ahead of the curve: The Power of Assessment to Transform Teaching and Learning, pg. 156, 2007.

Chapter 3 Resources

Developing Assessments[8]

Multiple Choice

Advantages

- Amenable to item analysis
- Efficient scoring
- Can assess wide-range of learning objectives

Disadvantages

- High quality items are difficult and time-consuming to develop
- Students may not be able to demonstrate their thought process or full scope of knowledge

Checklist for developing quality questions[9]

___Item stem poses a direct question
___One best or correct answer
___Distracters address plausible misconceptions to make item analysis more effective (no "throwaway distracters")
___Correct answers are evenly distributed amongst answer choices (correct answers are not mostly A's or all C's)
___Response options are brief and parallel

Short Answer

Advantages

- Scores less likely to be influenced by guessing
- Requires increased cognitive ability to generate answers
- Relatively easy to construct

Disadvantages

- Grading can be difficult and time-consuming
- Not suitable for item analysis

Checklist for developing quality questions

___A direct question is posed
___One blank is needed to respond; length of blank is not a clue
___Questions avoid hidden clues (e.g. version of a word, genders, a/an, etc.)

True/False

Advantages

- Relatively easy to write and develop
- Quick to score and objective nature limits bias in scoring
- Can ask students to correct false statements for further understanding

Disadvantages

- May overestimate learning due to the influence of guessing
- Difficult to differentiate between effective difficult items and trick items
- Often leads to testing of trivial facts or bits of information

Checklist for developing quality questions

___Statement is entirely true or false as stated
___One fact per item tested
___Number of true and false questions balanced

Essay

Advantages

- Encourage integration of theories and expression of opinions
- Promote original, novel thinking
- Advantageous for assessing complex learning outcomes

Disadvantages

- Subjective grading is less reliable
- Not effective in assessing lower-level cognitive skills
- More time-consuming, so limited content can be assessed

Strategies

- Develop a grading rubric and share with students prior to assessment

[8] Adapted from *Checking for Understanding*, by Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey, 2007
[9] Source: R. Stiggins

- Develop a system to grade essays without student names to reduce subjectivity

Beginning Data Analysis Protocol

Analysis	Reflection
Looking at your item analysis report, what standards did your class master?	What do you think helped them master those standards?
What standards did the class NOT master but you feel shuld have?	What clues do their responses give you about why the students were not able to do well? (Go back to the test and look at the individual items for this specific standard and the answers that students chose. Can you tell what they were thinking? What misconceptions did they have?
As a grade level, were there some standards that one class met but not the other?	Share with each other and note here briefly what you did to help your students master that standard.
As a grade level, is there a standard that all of your classes missed that will be on the next assessment?	1. Did students miss the standard for the same reason? What was/were the reason(s)? 2. What ideas do you have as a grade level about how to reteach that standard?

Student Reflection and Record Keeping Form

Name_____ School Year_____ Subject_____

CST	My Goal	My Score	Difference

My thoughts about why I got this score_____
_____

What I can work on _____
_____

Benchmark #1	My Goal	My Score	Difference

My thoughts about why I got this score_____
_____

What I can work on _____
_____

Benchmark #2	My Goal	My Score	Difference

My thoughts about why I got this score_____
_____

What I can work on _____
_____

Benchmark #3	My Goal	My Score	Difference

My thoughts about why I got this score_____
_____

What I can work on _____
_____

Benchmark #4	My Goal	My Score	Difference

My thoughts about why I got this score_____
_____

What I can work on _____
_____

Additional Resources:

Fisher, Douglas and Nancy Frey. Checking for Understanding: Formative Assessment Techniques for Your Classroom, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA, 2007.

Ainsworth, Larry and Donald Viegut. Common formative assessments: How to Connect Standards-based Instruction and Assessment, Corwin Press, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2006.

Brookheart, Susan M., *How to give effective feedback to your students.*

Chapter 4:

How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?

Topics
- Models for Teacher Dialogue
- Preparing for Protocols
- School-wide Interventions

Any time we examine student work and notice that the majority of our class does not meet grade level expectations, we can choose to respond in any number of ways:

1. We can blame the students. "*They didn't work hard enough. They didn't pay attention, etc."*
2. We can blame the system. "*There's too much to teach. My students were three years behind when they got to me. How am I supposed to catch them up*?"

OR

3. **We can use it as an opportunity to examine our practice and in the process learn something about our students and ourselves that will help increase achievement.**

In Chapter 2 we discussed how to make sense of the data. At a MINIMUM, after a preliminary analysis, teachers should be able to tell a student:

a) what they mastered

b) what they did not master

c) what errors got in the way of mastery

This information is usually enough to help teachers start thinking about what they can do differently, but data analysis isn't all teachers need to figure about what *they* need to do differently.

Models for Teacher Dialogue

In the examples of teacher dialogue that we shared in Chapter 2, teachers exchanged ideas with one another that they would later use to re- teach some concepts to individual children, small groups of children, or the entire class. Sometimes, however, it is difficult to come up with new ideas since teachers usually deliver their best instruction the first time. Also, it is hard to know what to do differently if it is unclear why a student did not master the concept in the first place. This is where using a protocol can be helpful.

Protocols serve several purposes:

1) To focus a group's thinking about a specific question or dilemma

2) To provide a process that encourages thinking about a problem in different ways

3) To foster an exchange of ideas and multiple points of view

4) To surface and challenge basic assumptions that guide our work

By using a well defined and articulated process, anyone can gain insight through their colleagues about how to address individual student needs and personal challenges. The next few pages provide some samples to help you decide which protocol might best suit your needs. Tips about the preparation that needs to happen *before* the protocol (to make sure it actually works) are offered in the resource section.

Protocol Types

There are many different kinds of protocols to choose from. Which you use depends on the kind of feedback you need and the data you have available. For example, if you want feedback on a lesson *design*, you can bring a written lesson plan to your group before you implement it and get feedback on that. If you want feedback on lesson *implementation,* you might ask that your colleagues observe you in your classroom while you are teaching the concept with which your students struggle. Maybe you want help analyzing student work to determine your class' strengths and needs. You can also bring a dilemma to the group and ask them to help you adopt a different perspective.

Protocol Type[10]	**Purpose**	**Kinds of Data**
Consultancy	To tap the expertise in a group about a particular **dilemma.** Dilemmas deal with issues with which you are struggling—something that is problematic or has not been as effective as you would like it to be—anything related to your work.	½ page that describes your experience/challenge- why it is a challenge. Includes all the factors that surround it and why you think they are important.
Tuning	To tap the expertise in a group about a particular **lesson design.** It could be for an entire unit plan or a single lesson.	Completed Lesson or Unit Plan
ATLAS	To identify patterns in student work.	Essays, Posters, Drawing- whatever assignment you gave to a student that involved lots of thinking and gave them freedom in how they approached the task.
Observation-	To get feedback on a **specific practice** he/she may be trying.	Descriptive notes- what the teacher is doing, what the students are doing.

The *Real* Power of Protocols

Regardless of the specifics, using a protocol will draw upon colleagues' expertise and surface any assumptions you may have that you are not aware of but impact your work. Why is it

[10] *Note:* All protocols require preparation beforehand. All require that participants understand the purpose for using the rigid structure that often feels awkward at first.

important to make our assumptions explicit? Because we can't make changes if we are not aware of what is impacting our decisions in the first place.

Every day educators make any number of instructional decisions on the spot. These do not include the decisions they made *before* the lesson even started, during the planning phase. Some of the decisions are deliberate. Some are not. It is the unconscious ones, the ones we make instinctively that need to be examined. By making implicit knowledge explicit, we can question, refine, and hone it.[11]

Prepping for Protocols

Introducing the concept to your staff

A learning community listens, observes, and gives feedback to each other all for the purpose of growing professionally and establishing a cohesive program of instruction. Cultivating a community that can give and receive professional feedback takes practice. Following strict protocols for conversation and observation of instruction both honors and protects people's vulnerability while creating a climate where growth can occur.

Keep in mind that feedback can be direct or indirect, positive, or negative. How it is received depends largely on how it is given. The purpose of all protocols is to provide a structure in which giving and receiving feedback is both safe and useful. When we follow protocols well, ALL parties benefit.

Soliciting Staff Buy In

As with any new initiative, the more that people understand the need, the goal, and can influence *the process*, the more likely it is that the initiative will succeed. See resource section for an example of how the Acorn Woodland Elementary (AWE) leadership team rolled out the idea of peer observation to the rest of their colleagues.

[11] Noel Tichy interview with Dennis Sparks JSD Spring 2005 Vol. 26, No.2

School-wide Interventions

Sometimes, no matter how hard we try, the pace of our professional learning can not keep up with student need. For students who begin to fall behind despite attempts to re-teach content in class, it is important that there is a system in place ready to address their needs at the first sign of difficulty. This system should involve everyone and the criteria for placement as well as the criteria for exiting out of services should be clear to staff and students alike.

Mini-Case Study #1

> *At Urban Promise Academy (UPA), a middle school in the Fruitvale, students who score a "3" on the State CELDT test are eligible for an extra 45 minutes of instruction in the morning 4 days a week. This intervention block is called, "Morning Boost". Three times a year, teachers administer the SELP test, an assessment similar to the CELDT. These results are then used to evaluate who moves out of the program and to plan instruction for students who remain. Parents are notified of their child's need and this opportunity for improvement though a personal letter and a face to face meeting. They are given strict guidelines for participation but are also invited to special celebrations and offered concrete incentives (such as breakfast) to participate. On a recent survey students gave the program high marks stating that the extra morning "boost" helped them do better in their regular classes.*

At UPA the approach to intervention is ***systematic.*** All teachers participate. All students know about it. The criteria for participation is clear and public. Students also know the criteria for cycling in and out of the intervention so their approach is also ***fluid.*** Invitations to participate in Morning Boost are sent after each assessment so their system is ***timely***. Though presented to families as "optional", the academic culture at the school is so pressing that the "invitation" is more of a ***directive***. [12]

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

The notion of how to respond to struggling students has changed over the years. Currently, the formal definition of RTI is "a multi-tiered approach to help struggling learners. Students' progress is closely monitored at each stage of intervention to determine the need for further research-based instruction and/or intervention in general education, in special education, or both[13]." What is powerful about this approach is that ALL resources at a school are focused toward supporting student academic achievement.

Designing Your Response to Intervention

There are three things to consider when designing your system of intervention:

1. the different stages of intervention
2. who is impacted at each stage
3. the educational resources you can garner at each stage

[12] Buffum, A., Mattos, M., & Weber C., *Pyramid of response to education: RTI, PLCs, and how to respond when students don't learn. (2008)* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.
[13] RTI Action Network website

The following chart highlights a proposed response to intervention model. It identifies when the intervention occurs, who is targeted, and who is responsible for implementing the intervention.

Stages of Intervention

When	What	Who benefits?	Person Responsible
1. Before School	1. Review student CST results and identify target students. Enroll target students in intervention programs beginning on day 1 of school. 2. Teachers create specific plan to support targeted students.	15-25% of students	School Leadership, Classroom teacher
2. Immediate	Checking for understanding- adjusting instruction **in the moment** at which instruction occurs. *Common techniques include*: call and response, class work, do now, or quizzes. (For descriptions of how to implement "in the moment" assessments, please review Ch 4.)	100% of students	Classroom teacher
3. After 1st benchmark	1. Set aside "reteach" week for teachers to working with small groups. Here they implement new lessons based on student needs identified by their assessments. 2. Use your before/after-school program to meet student needs. Align curriculum to learning gaps that have been identified for individual children. 3. Meet with families to set learning goals and specific home skills practice. 4. Other (see UPA example described earlier in this Chapter).	10%- 15% of students for each different standard	Classroom teacher, Families, additional personnel (Some schools "push-in" their extra resource people during intervention time to increase the number of adults working with small groups at any given time.)
4. After 2nd formal assessment	1. Continue to leverage resources to support student. 2. Conduct an SST[14].	5-8% of students	Classroom teacher, Families, Specialists, SST Team
5. After 3rd formal assessment	1. Continue to leverage resources. 2. Conduct follow up SST. 3. Possibly recommend to Special	5-8% of students	Classroom teacher, Families, Special Education Coordinator, Specialists, SST Team

[14] If a child does not respond to one intervention, a change should be made to reflect the child's individual needs – before referring to Special Ed. The change maybe determined by consulting with Special Education staff.

	Education.[15]		

Unfortunately, most classrooms in our district will not have 90% of students at benchmark after the first assessment. Many may never reach that goal, but this does not mean that all of the students are then referred to an after-school intervention. Continue to assess student progress, and as students gain proficiency with key concepts rotate new students into intervention programs. After the second assessment, the students that should be referred for more intensive interventions are those that have shown NO growth at all. If a significant number of students in the classroom have shown no growth from the first assessment, then the main target of intervention is the classroom instructor.

Preparing to implement Response to Intervention

1. Make your Student Support Team as strong as possible:
    a. Select the members of the SST who can access resources.
    b. Determine how the interventions will be monitored or measured.
    c. Make clear to everyone how children are referred to the SST.
2. Determine who is available on your staff to assist with small groups.
3. Determine the curriculum to be used during intervention time.[16]

The multiple rewards of RTI

If you invest the time to design a thorough RTI approach, you will accomplish a number of goals[17]:

- Providing a clear framework for staff
- Supplying empowering tools
- Creating a clear path for all students
- Increasing accountability for staff and students
- Improving levels of achievement
- Identifying what works and building on it
- Improving the special education referral process
- Increasing communication with families

.**Mini- Case Study #2**

[15] By the time a child is referred for Special Education screening, there should be enough information to hypothesize the disability. Children with low-incidence disabilities should go directly to assessment as their disabilities are less likely to be remediated by RTI.
[16] *Some ideas are*: Early Reading Tutor, Read Naturally, Kaleidoscope, Voyager (suggested for middle school), Words Their Way.
[17] Solution Tree, www.**allthingsplc.info**

At Bridges Academy at Melrose, a K-5 school, children are screened at regular intervals when they first enter kindergarten to ensure they are grasping key concepts at the expected rate. Any child who is struggling for any reason in grasping curriculum is automatically placed in daily intervention before school, after school or during the school day for 15-30 minutes with an Instructional Assistant (IA) who has received coaching from the teacher on specific math and reading activities to help the student. Once the child begins to demonstrate benchmark or close to benchmark goals, he is taken out of intervention. About halfway through the Kindergarten year, various members of the school staff including the IA, School Psychologist and Reading Coach begin to assess and monitor the low achieving children using DIBELS, a monitoring system that currently follows the lowest students through 2nd grade or beyond if needed. Children are able to flow in and out of intervention based on their need at that time as they progress through various stages of the curriculum. When children do not respond to this initial intervention, an SST is held, often including Special Education staff for consultation, to brainstorm changes in the intervention to better meet the child's needs.

In first grade, students are assessed using DIBELS at the beginning of the year. Those that require intervention are monitored using Progress Monitoring throughout the year. Again, the Instructional Assistance provides intervention multiple times during the day depending on the needs of the students. When children show significant progress they exit intervention; if they continue to struggle an SST is held to brainstorm additional interventions. It is important to note that while reading skills are monitored closely using DIBELS there is not at this time a comparable assessment and monitoring system available for math. Teachers use various means to assess and monitor this area.

Collaboration among school staff with different areas of expertise is essential for the successful implementation of the Bridges RTI program; the SST is the place where this collaboration happens most effectively. For example, the School Psychologist and Speech Pathologist are consulted for effective intervention with General Education students. The principal also participates in all SSTs to provide her perspective on the progress of the child over multiple years. Finally, SB65 Consultant provides important behavioral support for students struggling in this area through a Behavior Reports system where students are held accountable for behavior goals at multiple points during the day.

Through systematic assessment, easy transitions in and out of an established intervention program, a strong SST, and a culture of communication and collaboration, students at Bridges Academy are identified and receive intervention from the very beginning of their schooling career.

Chapter 4 Resources

Peer Observation Protocol

Acorn Woodland Elementary

Rationale
In order to strengthen our school-wide alignment, teachers need to see instructional practices in action – in their grade level class as well as in lower/upper grades to see the vertical continuum of practices. To take ownership of our school-wide practices, we as stakeholders need to be familiar with what they look like in action at our school. Taking ownership of our school-wide practices also means that we undertake peer observations in a spirit of inquiry.

Peer Observations in the Spirit of Inquiry
Peer observations will and should raise important questions about practices. They may make us wonder why we choose to implement a practice a certain way in our own class, or encourage us to try a strategy a colleague is implementing. They may help us see gaps or needs for increased alignment or rigor throughout our school.

The purpose of peer observations is not lay blame, judge or attribute.

Establishing Norms/Agreements
To conduct peer observations and offer only warm feedback would not do justice to us as practitioners. However, to offer critiques without context also may not further our learning. To effectively use Peer Observations as a tool for inquiry, it means that we establish norms and agreements together about the observation and develop authentic questions – both from the observer side and the teacher being observed.

Using Peer Observation to Further One's Own Goals/Inquiry Around Practice
Peer observations are also a way for teachers to get input/ideas on a question they have about their own practice. We can get ideas and input from one another, in addition to experts. Peer observations are grounded in the idea that, "we all have something to learn and we all have something to teach."

Developing Essential Questions
Teachers who are observing may need support in developing and refining these questions. For example, a question might be, "What does X teacher do when students interrupt?" or, "What does X teacher do to get students to produce quality work in RT groups?" We want to support teachers in developing these questions since the golden opportunity and resource of observing a peer does not happen very often!

Using Peer Observation to Further the Learning of the Teacher Being Observed
In addition, the teacher being observed may want feedback on a specific question or challenge. We should take the time to establish what the teacher being observed hopes to draw from the observation as well, to support their learning and to avoid giving feedback without context, or engaging in "protocol light." A teacher being observed may want to simply hear the observations of the observer. Or a teacher might be working to release responsibility for facilitating discussions to students. Or a teacher may be working to tune a certain part of a lesson to develop deeper student understanding. It is helpful and important for the observer to know these things beforehand.

Debriefing and Drawing Learning's After the Peer Observation
Teachers need time and thought partnership after a peer observation to reflect and draw their own learning ah-ha's from the observation. This can happen through a conversation or through a protocol.

SAMPLE TIMELINE

Activity	***Date***	***Time***
PD to build common framework and establish Peer Observation Agreements		
Coach-teacher meet to establish and narrow focus of observation		
Teacher-teacher do pre-conference to share observers question/challenge, observee's context and requests for feedback (:20 minutes)		
Teacher-teacher Peer observation Class: Lesson:		
Teacher-teacher debrief to reflect on question, challenge, insights		

Using Protocols: Logistics of setting up a Peer Observation CYCLE
A good idea requires careful planning and clear communication. Below is an example of how expectations for peer observation were coordinated at AWE.

Teacher: _____

Peer Observation Components:

- ❒ **ATTEND** - Attend the Peer Observation Framework PD on 2/13/09
- ❒ **REFLECT/BRAINSTORM** - Brainstorm to identify an instructional challenge (1 in ELA/SLA and 1 in Math) on Pre-Observation forms attached
- ❒ **MATCH** - Coaches will match teachers for Peer Observation

PeerObservation.com
Congratulations, you have been matched with
_____

The focus of your peer observation is
_____

This instruction takes place on day/time
_____
⇨ **Please proceed to the sign-up phase of Peer Observations**

- ❒ **SIGN-UP** - Teachers will use sign ups on Office Counter to schedule 3 components of Peer Observation.

1. Pre-conference (:20 minutes)
Date_____Time – from_____ to _____

2. Observation (:30-:45 minutes)
Date_____Time – from_____ to _____

3. Post-conference (:20 minutes)
Date_____Time – from_____ to _____

- ❒ **CONDUCT PROTOCOL** - Teachers will use the Peer Observation PROTOCOL to guide the conferences and observation. This is to support the learning of both teachers and our "spirit of inquiry" and critical friendship.

Consultancy Protocol

Purpose: A Consultancy is a structured process for helping an individual or a team think more expansively about a particular, concrete issue or piece of work.

Time: Approximately 35 minutes

Roles:
- Presenter (whose work is being discussed by the group)
- Facilitator (who sometimes participates, depending on the size of the group)

Steps:

1. The presenter gives an overview of the dilemma with which s/he is struggling, and *frames a question for the Consultancy group to consider. If the presenter has brought student work, educator work, or other "artifacts," there is a pause here to silently examine the work/documents. The focus of the group's conversation is on the dilemma. (5-10 minutes)

2. The Consultancy group asks clarifying questions of the presenter—that is, questions that have brief, factual answers. (5 minutes)

3. The group talks with each other about the dilemma presented. (15 minutes)
Possible questions to frame the discussion:
What did we hear?
What didn't we hear that they think might be relevant?
What assumptions seem to be operating?
What questions does the dilemma raise for us?
What do we think about the dilemma?
What might we do or try if faced with a similar dilemma? What have we done in similar situations?

Members of the group sometimes suggest solutions to the dilemma. Most often, however, they work to define the issues more thoroughly and objectively. The presenter doesn't speak during this discussion, but instead listens and takes notes.

4. The presenter reflects on what s/he heard and on what s/he is now thinking, sharing with the group anything that particularly resonated for him or her during any part of the Consultancy. (5 minutes)

5. The facilitator leads a brief conversation about the group's observation of the Consultancy process. (5 minutes)

*The framing of this question, as well as the quality of the presenter's reflection on the dilemma being discussed, are key features of this protocol. (See "preparing for a Consultancy.)

Using Protocols: Preparing for a Consultancy

Framing Consultancy Dilemmas and Consultancy Questions

1. Think about your dilemma. Some criteria for a dilemma might include:

- something that is bothering you enough that your thoughts regularly return to it
- an issue/ dilemma that does not depend on getting other people to change (in other words, can you affect the dilemma by changing your practice)?
- it is important to you, and it is something you are willing to work on

2. Do some reflective writing about your dilemma. Some questions that might help are:

- Why is this a dilemma for you? Why is this dilemma important to you?
- If you could take a snapshot of this dilemma, what would you/we see?
- What have you done already to try to remedy or manage the dilemma?
- What have been the results of those attempts?
- Who do you hope changes? Who do you hope will take action to resolve this
- dilemma? (*If your answer is not you, you need to change your focus. You will want to present a dilemma that is about your practice, actions, behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions, and not someone else's.)*
- What do you assume to be true about this dilemma, and how have these assumptions influenced your thinking about the dilemma?

3. Frame a focus question for your Consultancy group:

- Put your dilemma into question format.
- Try to pose a question around the dilemma that seems to you to get to the heart
- of the matter.

Remember that the question you pose will guide the Consultancy group in their discussion of the dilemma.

4. Critique your focus question.

- Is this question important to my practice?
- Is this question important to student learning?
- Is this question important to others in my profession?

Preparing a half page description of the issue for your colleagues

Write out your dilemma and include as much contextual description as you feel others will need to really understand it. One page is generally sufficient; even a half page is often enough. If you prefer not to write it out, you can make notes for yourself and do an oral presentation, but please do some preparation ahead of time.

End your description with a specific question. What do you REALLY want to know? What is your real dilemma? This question will help your Consultancy group focus its feedback. Questions that can be answered
with a "yes" or "no" generally provide less feedback for the person with the dilemma, so avoid those kinds of questions.

Please note: Consultancies don't go well when people bring dilemmas that they are well on the way to figuring out themselves, or when they bring a dilemma that involves only getting other people to change. To get the most out of this experience, bring something that is still puzzling you about your practice. It is riskier to do, but we guarantee that you will learn more

Some Generic Examples of Dilemmas

- The teaching staff seems to love the idea of involving the students in meaningful learning that connects the students to real issues and an audience beyond school, but nothing seems to be happening in reality.
Question: What can I do to capitalize on teachers' interest and to help them translate theory into practice?

- The community is participating in visioning work, but the work doesn't seem to relate to the actual life of the school—it is just too utopian.
Question: How do I mesh dreams and reality?

- Teachers love doing projects with the students, but the projects never seem to connect to one another or have very coherent educational goals or focus; they are just fun.
Question: How do I work with teachers so they move to deep learning about important concepts while still staying connected to hands-on learning?

- We keep getting grants to do specific projects with students and the community, but when the money is gone, the work doesn't continue.
Question: How does sustainability actually work? What needs to change for it to work?

- No matter how hard I try to be inclusive and ask for everyone's ideas, about half of the people don't want to do anything new - they think things were just fine before.
Question: How do I work with the people who don't want to change without alienating them?

Using Protocols: Some Tips

Step 1: The success of the Consultancy often depends on the quality of the presenter's reflection in Step 1 as well as on the quality and authenticity of the question framed for the Consultancy group. However, it is not uncommon for the presenter, at the end of a Consultancy, to say, "Now I know what my real question is." That is fine, too. It is sometimes helpful for the presenter to prepare ahead of time a brief (one-two page) written description of the dilemma and the issues related to it for the Consultancy group to read as part of Step 1.
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Step 2: Clarifying questions are for the person asking them. They ask the presenter "who, what, where, when, and how." These are not "why" questions. They can be answered quickly and succinctly, often with a phrase or two.

Step 3: Probing questions are for the person answering them. They ask the presenter "why" (among other things), and are open-ended. They take longer to answer, and often require deep thought on the part of the presenter before s/he speaks.

Step 4: When the group talks while the presenter listens, it is helpful for the presenter to pull his/her chair back slightly away from the group. This protocol asks the Consultancy group to talk about the presenter in the third person, almost as if s/he is not there. As awkward as this may feel at first, it often opens up a rich conversation, and it gives the presenter an opportunity to listen and take notes, without having to respond to the group in any way. Remember that it is the group's job to offer an analysis of the dilemma or question presented. It is not necessary to solve the dilemma or to offer a definitive answer. It is important for the presenter to listen in a non-defensive manner. Listen for new ideas, perspectives, and approaches. Listen to the group's analysis of your question/issues. Listen for assumptions—both your own and the group's—implicit in
the conversation. Don't listen for judgment of you by the group. This is not supposed to be about you, but about a question you have raised. Remember that you asked the group to help you with this dilemma.

Step 5: The point of this time period is not for the presenter to give a "blow by blow" response to the group's conversation, nor is it to defend or further explain. Rather, this is a time for the presenter to talk about what were, for him/her, the most significant comments, ideas and questions s/he heard. The presenter can also share any new thoughts or questions s/he had while listening to the Consultancy group.

Step 6: Debriefing the process is key. Don't short-change this step.

Adapted from the work of Gene Thompson-Grove, Founding Co-Director of the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF)

ATLAS PROTOCOL

1. Getting Started

The facilitator reminds the group of the norms: no fault, collaboration, and consensus and, with the group, establishes time limits for each part of the process.

Note: Each of the next four steps should be about 10 minutes in length. The presenter is silent until the "Reflecting on the Process," step 5. The group should avoid talking to the presenter during steps 2-4. It is sometimes helpful for the presenter to pull away from the table and take notes.

2. Sharing the Context
The educator bringing the student work:

- gives a very brief statement of the assignment.
- describes only what the student was asked to do and avoid explaining what he or she hoped or expected to see.
- refrains from giving any background information about the student or the student's work.
- avoids any statements about whether this is a strong or weak student or whether this is a particularly good or poor piece of work from this student.

Note: After the group becomes more familiar with this process for looking at student work, you may find it useful to hear the educator's expectations. However, this information will focus more of the group's attention on the design of the assignment, the instruction, and the assessment, rather than on seeing what is actually present in the student's work.

2. Describing the Student Work
The facilitator asks: "What do you see?"

During this period the group gathers as much information as possible from the student work. Group members describe what they see in the student's work, avoiding judgments about quality or interpretations about what the student was doing.

Note: If judgments or interpretations do arise, the facilitator should ask the person to describe the evidence on which they are based. 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 Student Work
The facilitator asks: "From the student's perspective, what is the student working on?"

During this period, the group tries to make sense of what the student was doing and why. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the kind and quality of evidence. From the evidence gathered in the preceding section, try to infer: what the student was thinking and why; what the student does and does not understand; what the student was most interested in; how the
student interpreted the assignment. Think broadly and creatively. Assume that the work, no matter how confusing, makes sense to the student; your job is to see what the student sees. As you listen to each other's interpretations, ask questions that help you better understand each other's perspectives.

4. Implications for Classroom Practice
The facilitator asks: “What are the implications of this work for teaching and assessment?”

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 the teacher take next with this student?
— What teaching strategies might be most effective?
— What else would you like to see in the student work? 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?

5. Reflecting on the ATLAS
The presenter shares back what they learned about the student, the work, and what they’re now thinking. The discussion then opens to the larger group to discuss what was learned about the student, about colleagues, and self. (see “ensuring the success of the ATLAS Protocol for more ideas.)

6. Debriefing the Process
How well did the process work? (what went well, and what could be improved?) If the group has designated someone to observe the conversation, this person should report his or her observations.

Learning from Student Work is a tool to guide groups of teachers discovering what students 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 of 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 for NSRF.

Using Protocols: Ensuring the Success of the ATLAS Protocol

Selecting Student Work to Share

- Choose assignments that involve lots of thinking and that give students some freedom in how they approach the task.
- Avoid work that consists primarily of answers with little explanation or that involves the application of well-defined procedure. At times it may be useful to share several pieces of student work that show different approaches to the same assignment.
- Ambiguous or puzzling work tends to stimulate the best discussions. Since it does not readily match expectations, it encourages close attention to details and affords multiple interpretations. If this feels uncomfortable, it may be useful to start by examining anonymous samples of student work collected from within the group or gathered from other sources.

Sharing and Discussion of Student Work
Discussions of student work sometimes make people feel "on the spot" or exposed, either for themselves or for their students. The use of a structured dialogue format provides an effective technique for managing the discussion and maintaining its focus.

A structured dialogue format is a way of organizing a group conversation by clearly defining who should be talking when and about what. While at first it may seem rigid and artificial, a clearly defined structure frees the group to focus its attention on what is most important. In general, structured dialogue formats allot specified times for the group to discuss various aspects of the work.

Consider the student whose work is being examined to be a silent member of the group. Assume, as for any member, that the student is acting in good faith and has put forth his or her best effort.

Reflecting on the Process

Looking for evidence of student thinking …
• What did you see in this student's work that was interesting or surprising?
• What did you learn about how this student thinks and learns?
• What about the process helped you to see and learn these things?

Listening to colleagues thinking …
• What did you learn from listening to your colleagues that was interesting or surprising?
• What new perspectives did your colleagues provide?
• How can you make use of your colleagues' perspectives?

Reflecting on one's own thinking …
• What questions about teaching and assessment did looking at the students' work raise for you?
• How can you pursue these questions further?
• Are there things you would like to try in your classroom as a result of looking at this student's work?

Adapted from the work of Gene Thompson-Grove, Founding Co-Director of the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF)

Peer Observation
PRE-OBSERVATION

Pre-Observation Date: M T W R F ___/___/___ Time ____:____

Observer:_____

Teacher being observed:_____

Observer's Guiding Question for Observation (What question do you have about your own practice? What do you hope to learn or get more info/ideas from this observation? What challenge are you wrestling with in your own practice?)

Information & context for Observers (What should observers know about your class? What are your current instructional foci? Goals? Challenges?)

Specific Requests for feedback (What do you want feedback on? Is there some part of your practice that you are working on tuning? What could an observer watch out for and provide you with?)

Schedule for Observation: Day & Time _____
Coverage will be provided by: _____

Peer Observation
POST-OBSERVATION

Post-Observation Date: M T W R F ___/___/___ Time ____:____

Observer:_____

Teacher being observed:_____

Revisit your priority challenge. (What reflections do you have on your own question/challenge? What insights will you take back to your teaching?)

Feedback. Revisit the teacher's request for feedback. (What feedback can you offer based on his/her specific request/question?)

Insights for our school-wide practice (What insights or connections can you make with our school-wide practice? What reflections can you offer on the process of the peer observation protocol?)

Chapter 5:

How will we deepen the learning for students who have already mastered essential knowledge and skills?

Topics
- Characteristics of Differentiation
- Options for Differentiating Instruction

The goal of differentiation is to provide instruction that is *both* **accessible** *and* **challenging** to *every* student. This means that when a student is mastering the curriculum at a faster pace than the majority of his/her peers, differentiation will allow him/her to still be challenged.

Characteristics of Differentiation

In a differentiated classroom the instruction is *student centered*. Children feel emotionally and physically safe. They have opportunities to make their own meaning and to experience appropriate levels of challenge. When working, they are given *choices* about:

- what they learn (**content**)
- how they learn it (**process**)
- and how they demonstrate their knowledge (**product**).

Examples

Content	Offer options for the text that students read. (Reciprocal Teaching allows students to read and discuss books at their level is small groups.)
Process	Speed up the time in which a student is expected to master the material. Give them the opportunity to "test-out" of a standard and move on to another one.
Product	Essay, multiple choice, poem, etc.

Unfortunately, most teachers shy away from attempting to differentiate because they believe it will take a lot of extra work or they do not trust their ability to manage small groups effectively. Below are some strategies to help increase their confidence and success with the practice.

Ultimately successful instruction and differentiation both whole class and small group is based on classroom management. When using small groups teachers must model for their student the process and expectations for small group instruction. Follow these three guidelines when teaching new strategies:

- Model for the students
- Let the students practice
- Hold them accountable for behavior and work.

OPTIONS FOR DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION[18]

Differentiating when UNIT planning

1. Frame lessons and units as questions, issues, or problems

Lessons structured as questions or problems tend to be more challenging and interesting than those that are structured as topics. The openness of the questions stimulates thought, permits and encourages inventive thinking, encourages different responses from different students, and allows for the pursuit of authentic learning and investigation. Further, students with a wide range of needs can answer "big questions"; some learners will provide answers that are more concrete while others will be able to answer in ways that are more complex and abstract.

Examples:

A history unit could be "How has geography affected California's history?" instead of "California History."

A science unit could be "Why do people say 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away'?" instead of "The Digestive System."

The question helps focus the topic, informs the students what they will be studying, and provides a specific evaluation metric.

2. Create Learning Agendas

A learning agenda is a list of projects or activities that must be completed during a specific period of time, usually during a unit of study. Typically, students work independently on their agendas, asking for support when needed and collaborating with other learners when necessary. The agenda helps students to visually track the work that needs completing and the activities they have finished. Students using agendas, therefore, can develop management and organizational skills.

The actual agenda tasks, of course, vary according to specific student needs. In one classroom, all students had the same agenda for a unit on Africa (e.g., make a map and label the countries, read a book from the classroom library on African people) but some learners had extra items for enrichment (e.g., write an African folktale) and one child had an item related to her speech and language goals (e.g., write a short story about the Nile River using your personal vocabulary words).

3. Project-Based Instruction

Projects are an ideal learning activity for any student who needs some time alone to work independently and for those who thrive when given opportunities to immerse themselves in one topic. In managing projects, teachers should set clear timelines, teach students how to chart their own progress and develop progress reports, and help students to produce a final product or products.[19]

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[18] (adapted from *Differentiating Instruction: 5 Easy Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms by Paula Kluth, 2005)*

[19] *Avoid projects that involve copy work and passive learning. Instead develop projects that will inspire higher order thinking and meaningful engagement. For example, instead of asking them to do a report on the school district's recycling practices, ask them to summarize the opinions of two experts, interview two school employees, and invent a model policy to present to the school board.*

Differentiating classroom structures

1. **Vary the groups**

Groupings should change throughout the day and throughout the year so that students have opportunities to work with all classmates and learn from all peers regularly. Flexible grouping means that at different times and for different lessons, students might be grouped or paired based on interests, needs, or skills. Groupings, during some lessons, can also be based on ability- giving learners needing enrichment opportunities to exchange ideas with one another and giving students with particular needs time to address specific skills or competencies.

In the best situations, groups are fluid, change often, and offer all learners opportunities to take on a variety of roles (e.g., leader, facilitator).

2. **Set up Centers or Stations**

Set up different areas in the classroom for students to work on various tasks simultaneously. (Not all students need to go to all stations all the time.) Focus the centers on important learning goals and use materials that promote individual students' growth toward those goals; use activities addressing a wide range of reading levels, learning profiles, and student interests; provide clear directions; include instructions about what a student should do when he completes the work at the center; and include a record-keeping system to monitor what students do at the center and the quality level.

Differentiating in the middle of a unit or lesson

1. **Curriculum Compacting -**streamlining content so that students can move through it at a quicker pace and then have time to pursue an alternate topic or go into greater depth in an area of study.

Questions to consider when deciding how to compact the curriculum:

- *What's important?*
- *What can be skipped or eliminated?*
- *What do students already know or are able to do?*
- *What will they grasp easily?*
- *What can be accomplished quickly?*

2. **Quick Assessment** -"*Most Difficult First*"

The teacher previews the student assignment and selects the most difficult tasks marking them with an asterix. (No more than 2-3). Students are given the opportunity to do those items first as a means of demonstrating mastery or understanding. If the student is able to demonstrate mastery, then he/she may design a project that will allow him/her to *apply* the knowledge.

"*Exit Tickets*"- are a quick way to gauge whether or not students learned the content taught in each lesson. To implement, give each student an index card before leaving the room or at the end of an instructional sequence. Ask them to write their names on it and record their answers to a pre-determined prompt you give them. Collect them as they

transition to the next subject or classroom. Review the cards and separate according to responses. Group children the next day based on the level of understanding they demonstrated.

Sample exit card questions:

We have begun to study "author's craft." List and identify 3 examples of figurative language used in The Island of Blue Dolphins by Scott O'Dell.

Explain the difference between prime and composite numbers on your exit card. Feel free to give examples as part of your explanation.

3. Curriculum Overlapping[20]

Students needing more enrichment or more support might work on objectives that are different from those peers are addressing. When teachers use curriculum overlapping, some students focus on objectives that are different from but clearly connected to those being addressed by the class.

Examples:

A student who already knows a lot about world geography can opt out of the unit on this topic and instead work on a classroom computer assembling a classroom website that helps classmates study geography concepts and connect to pen pals around the world (student works on refining and learning technology skills while practicing geography skills).

A student who has already read and studied a certain novel being explored by the class can take time to adapt that novel into a screen play (student works on learning a new genre).

[20] (Reprinted with permission from Paula Kluth, *Differentiating Instruction: 5 Easy Strategies for Inclusive Classrooms* , 2005)

Chapter 5 Resources

BUILD STUDENT INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY[21]

1. Teach students how to make the most of their time by developing and assigning anchor activities that they must complete during what is typically considered "down-time".

Anchor activities- are ongoing assignments that students can work on independently throughout a unit, a grading period, or longer. They provide meaningful work for students during crucial moments in class that are often wasted. For example, when students first arrive to class or when they are waiting for the teacher to come help them because they can't do the task that was just assigned.

2. Teach students options for getting help that don't involve you.

"**Ask 3 before me**."- Students must consult three different resources before coming to you. (i.e. word wall, text, friend)

"R.I.C.E." – an acronym that reminds students to stop and reflect (They may have the answer already!)

Recall what your teacher said.

Imagine logically what the directions would be.

Check with a classmate.

See the "**expert**" for help.

"**Consult the student expert**"- assign one student to the "expert" desk.

"**Study Buddys**"- assigned to explain missed work.

[21] Generated from the works of Carol Ann Tomlinson.

STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT SMALL GROUP MANAGEMENT

BEFORE Instruction

- Post **sign up sheet** to "make an appointment" if students need your help while you are meeting with other students.
- Have a **tray** ready for students to place completed work.
- Create and **absent folder** where handouts for missing students can be placed (labeled with their name).
- Assign **home base seats-** where students begin and end each class.
- **Post directions** for each center
- **Model** the procedure for each center.
- **Assign student roles-** (who gets the materials, who collects completed work, who "asks the expert", etc.)

DURING Instruction

- **Use music** to cue the next activity and help lessen transition time.
- **Carry post its or a clipboard around** the classroom to note observations. Flag student needs you want to follow-up on and successes you want to praise.
- **Use praise** acknowledge groups or individuals on task, they can earn raffle tickets for prizes or just public praise.

AFTER Instruction

- Scan completed work and note on a chart who met you standard for quality.
- Say aloud what you noticed about the way students worked that pleased you.
- Set a goal for the next time students work in groups.

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Chapter 6:

Structures to Support Professional Learning Communities

Topics
- Finding Time
- Cycles of Assessment and Configurations
- Clarity of Purpose, Setting Norms

While conceptually it may be clear what Professional Learning Communities do, how they get there varies from school to school. Below are some ideas about how to address the most common challenges that all schools face in establishing high functioning collaborative teaching teams.

Finding Time

Time is perhaps the most valuable and yet scarcest resource in our schools. However, without protected collaboration time, teams will not be able to function effectively. Below are some examples of how by thinking creatively, several schools in our district have been able to make it work. You can use any of the variations we've shared or come up with your own.

"Release Team" model: A team of individuals periodically releases teams of teachers from regularly-scheduled classes. These individuals can be:

- Multiple STIP subs
- A combination of current staff: principal, AP, counselor, literacy teacher, etc.
- An arts, P.E. or other subject-focused team (could be hired internally or as subs)
- At least one member of the team must be credentialed

"Integrated Schedule" model: Students take some courses, during the regular day, that do not involve the generalists.

- Arts, P.E., "enrichment"
- In some schools this might bump into Reading First time requirements

"Extended day" model: Teachers' official work day is extended one or more days per week to support meeting before, after--or even during school**.** (This work is stipended.)

A brief snapshot: At Korematsu Discovery Academy, when Principal Charles Wilson was faced with the challenge of releasing teachers without a budget for subs, he created "Buddy Reading Time". Once a week, each class from a lower grade would visit an upper grade class to practice reading 1-1. Teachers from one grade would alternate overseeing the students each week, while their colleagues would be released to meet in their Teacher Collaborative Teams.

Cycles of Assessment and Configurations

Who makes up each teacher team and how often the teams meet can vary by each individual school. In some schools, teachers meet:

- In grade levels (for example- all 4th grade teachers)
- In departments (all history teachers)
- Cross-grade (K/1 circuit)

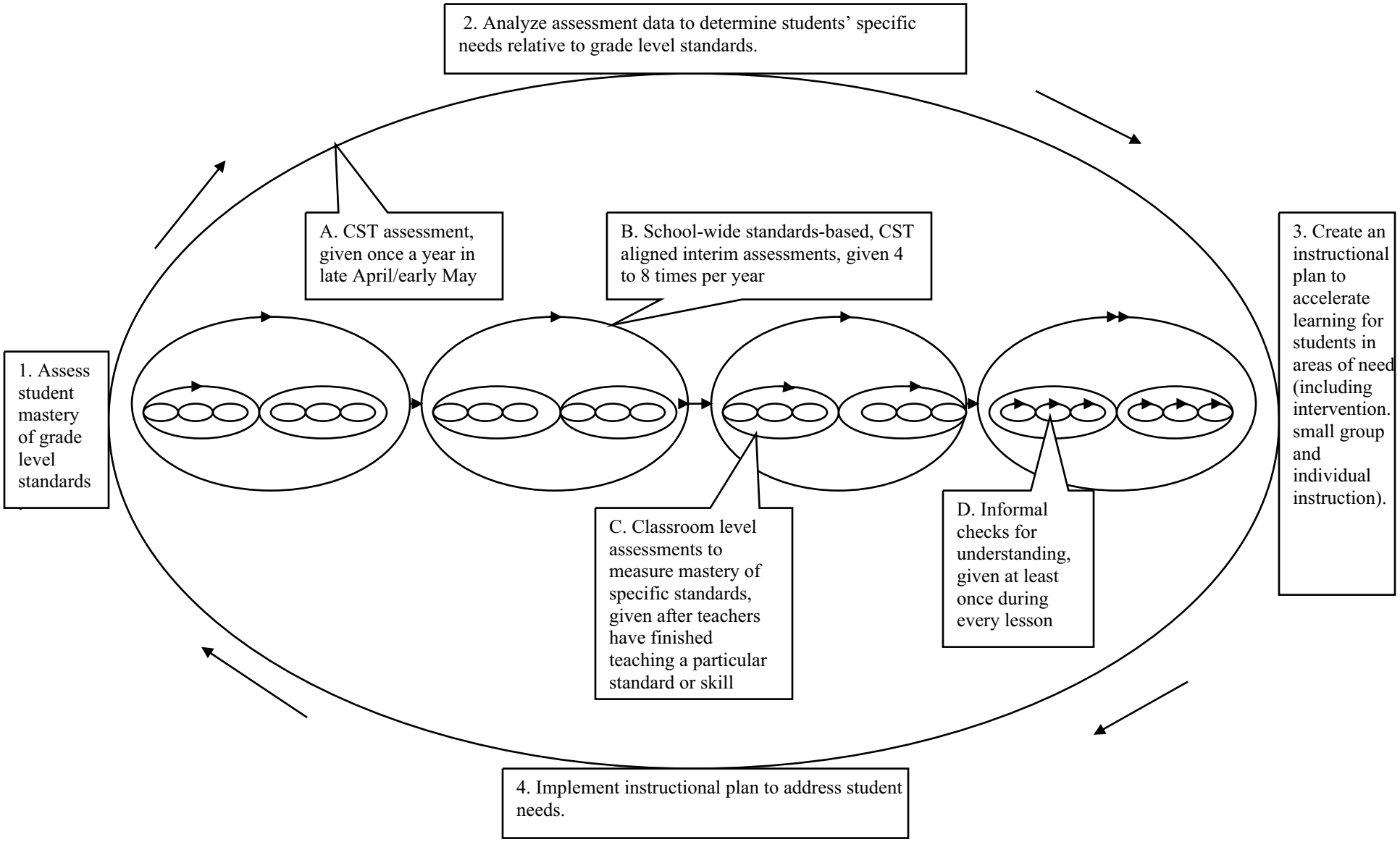
Whatever configuration you choose, the time you provide for teams to meet must be *consistent* and *dependable*, meaning that all teachers know when they are meeting and this does not change. "Regularly" can be:

- Once a week
- Twice a month (every other week)
- Every 6 weeks

Naturally, the more frequently teams meet, the faster they will be able to build their collaboration skills and reach their desired goals. However, we know that all schools are different and some have more resources than others. Do what you can, s*ome* time in teacher teams is better than *no* time at all.

On the next page is a sample cycle from one of the schools in our district. This school chose to link its collaboration cycle to the district's assessment cycle. Twice a month teachers met to discuss the results of the assessments they created on their own. Every six weeks, they shifted their focus to the results from the district benchmarks. The outer boxes outline the cycle in general. This cycle is repeated in different configurations throughout the year (as indicated by the smaller ovals) using different data.

Cycles of Assessment and Instruction at Think College Now Elementary School



Clarity of Purpose, Setting Norms

Just as it is important that the time you provide for teams to meet is consistent and dependable, what teams DO when they meet needs to be consistent and dependable as well. There should be no surprises or questions about what is going to happen during collaboration time or for example, confusion about what materials to bring.

It should be clear that when teams meet it is to:

1) reflect about teaching practice
2) use data to plan next steps for instruction
3) problem-solve teaching challenges.

You don't need to tell teams what data to use or what protocols to choose for reflection. In fact, the more autonomy that teams ultimately have over the approach to the work, the more useful they will find the process. However, it IS important that you communicate the non-negotiables clearly.

Each Professional Learning Community team must remain focused on the following values:

- Focused on student learning
- Collaborative in nature
- Invested in results
- Committed to improving
- Reflective about practice

Group Norms

Setting group norms will help a team stay on track. It will also help you overcome a challenge that schools often face when beginning collaboration: reluctance to share true challenges and/or conversation that is superficial and irrelevant. These challenges occur because although the data analysis and discussion protocol may seem straight forward, what teachers are really being asked to do when they come together is:

1) be vulnerable about challenges
2) trust their colleagues to help and not judge
3) be open to new ideas and potential "blind spots"

This is difficult regardless of the setting. It is even MORE difficult if:

1) teachers don't share a similar vision for instruction.
2) teachers don't respect each other's approach and/or perspective.
3) teachers don't believe they need to grow and/or blame students for lack of achievement

That is why it is very important that:

1) **Every time the group meets, restate the purpose** (e.g. "to help each other increase the academic achievement of our students by learning from each other")

2) **Every time a <u>new</u> group forms create new norms**. (Norms are common agreements about how the members of the group commit to interact with each other.)

Examples are:

- *Assume positive intent*
- *Speak your truth*
- *Start and end on time*
- *Monitor patterns of participation*
- *Have clear goals and outcomes*
- *Keep students at the center of our work*

3) **Provide frequent opportunities in small groups and school-wide for everyone to share a best practice**. This is important because in order to be open about challenges, everyone first needs to feel that they are competent and have something of value to contribute to the community.

4) **Designate someone (formal or informal facilitator) whose job it is to make sure the protocols and norms are followed**. This can be a teacher or a coach or the principal. Whoever it is, this person must be clear about their role and must feel that they have your backing. Your support can take any of a number of forms including occasionally sitting in on meetings, debriefing meetings with the teacher/coach, or reviewing notes from the meetings and giving teams written feedback. If you are leading the group, it is important that they know that you are only modeling the process for them and plan to gradually release the responsibility to them.

Chapter 6 Resources

Setting Norms

*Developing group **expectations** allows a group to share with each other and with the facilitator the reasons why they chose to come together. Not only does the group feel involved in the implementation of the workshop (thereby creating a sense of ownership or "buy-in"), but the facilitator then has a better sense of what group members expect to get from the meeting.*

*In order to meet their expectations the group must also come up with a set of **working agreements**. Agreements are commitments made by the group that will enable them to work together. The group, again, is responsible for brainstorming these agreements and taking ownership in honoring the agreements of their group. Agreements set a standard to which the group will work under.*

Expectations—How to Generate Them

- Explain to the group what expectations are. Provide an example if appropriate for illustrative purposes.
- Ask them to take a few moments (in silence) to think about what exactly it is that they as a group or as individuals expect to get out of the experience.
- Prompt the group to share their expectations by stating it in the **past tense.***
- Record expectations on newsprint, alternating colors among the various expectations being brainstormed.
- Clarify the list with the participants, ensuring that all participants understand them.

Tips:

- *It is important at the end of the meeting to revisit the expectations and ask the group if in fact their expectations were met*

- **The past tense is used to provide a sense of the expectation in a realized state—that it has happened. This process is also helpful when the group reviews its expectations at the end of the training. They can easily answer yes or no to each expectation statement.*

- *If the group is having trouble forming "proper" expectations assist them by asking, "It is now the day after the end of the meeting, you are sitting at home and thinking about the positive experience you had at the meeting. What are you thinking about, what did you learn, what tools did you gather and fine tune, what was you experience like?"*

Agreements—How to Generate Them

- Ask the group if they have used agreements in the past. If yes, have group members explain to the rest of the group why it is good to use agreements.
- If no-one is familiar with using agreements, then explain to the group what agreements are. Provide an example if appropriate for illustrative purpose.

- Ask them to take a few moments (in silence) to think about what exactly it is that they as a group or individual need to have in place to succeed as a group and achieve their expectations.
- Ask the group to share their agreements.
- Clarify the group list.
- Get agreement from the entire group. The groups should agree (by consensus) to respect the list of agreements.
- The agreements are posted in a visible place in your meeting area for the remainder of the training.

Tips:

- *If your group is having difficulty understanding or coming up with a list of agreements, you can prompt the group with questions like:*
    1. *What can we as a group agree to do in order to meet our list of expectations?*
    2. *How can we act towards one another (ex: be honest, listen, be open-minded) to maximize the time we spend together?*

- *You may want to further reinforce the agreements by having participants make some type of commitment to the list, such as signing the list, signing their names in the air, doing a "thumbs up." As the facilitator, make sure to get agreement from each individual through eye contact or other non-verbal signals.*

Setting Norms Worksheet

My Expectations for this Meeting:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Group's Expectations for this Meeting:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Agreements that I would like to propose:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Our Group's Agreements:

Responding to Common Facilitation Challenges[22]

Facilitation Challenge	Before Strategy	During Strategy
Side Talking Person	• Create ground rules and agreements to avoid side talking. • Arrange seating so that it is difficult to side talk (i.e.. Separate talkative people or meet in a circle).	• Call on side talking person for participation. • Walk near talker. • Make eye contact with talker.
Meeting Participant Who Dominates Discussion	• Ask the discussion dominator to serve as recorder. • Meet with the person ahead of time to ask them to help others contribute to discussion. • Create a metaphor: you can only speak when you have a "talking stick" or other object. • Make a group agreement that you can only speak once until all others have spoken.	• Affirm the discussion dominator and then open the discussion up to others. • Use body language to quiet the person. • Ask other meeting participants to contribute. • Ask meeting participants to use Post-its to give their ideas during a brainstorm or other discussion (silently).
Meeting Participants Who Are Difficult to Understand • **Soft spoken** • **Speech impediment** • **ESL or accent** • **Inarticulate or nervous**	• Know who is in your group ahead of time. • Plan the meeting to include non-verbal ways of expressing ideas.	• Ask clarifying questions to elicit short phrases & one-word responses. • Model active listening (with the entire group, repeat back to the person what you heard). • Ask the group to help clarify what the person has said. • Give the group time to think before a brainstorm, etc. • Model how you want the response to be given.
Meeting Participant Who Asks Obvious, Redundant, or Detail-Oriented Questions	• Send out a memo with key information to prepare meeting participants. • Remind the group of time limit on meeting. • Check understanding of context and desired outcomes individually with potential challenge person.	• Rephrase and affirm the question, check understanding with the group. • "Bin" the question and return to it if there's time later. • Remind the group of time limit. • Ask person to deal with details later. • Check-in & say what's happening ("there seem to be a lot of questions, what can we do about that?")

[22] Courtesy of: Ripple Effect Consulting

	• Invite the person to take on a leadership role.	• Use other group members to keep meeting focused.
"Know-it-all" Meeting Participants	• Invite the "know-it-all" to take on a leadership role. • Set the meeting context in a memo ("it's important we all share").	• Ask the "know-it-all" to speak first, a then ask for others' participation. • Give each person a time limit for speaking.
Meeting Participants Arriving Late and Leaving Early	• Use group agreements at one meeting to prepare for the next. • In memo, state that if meeting starts on time then it ends on time. • Consider the time it takes to start and arrive when creating agenda.	• Use other group members to catch-up late people. • Acknowledge that late start will create new meeting to finish agenda.

Chapter 7:

Management and Accountability

Topics
- Goal Setting
- Teacher Data Conferences
- Managing Through Products

Leaders hold teams accountable by communicating their values clearly and frequently. When teams encounter obstacles that interfere with the outcomes that have been made clear, effective leaders help the teams remove the obstacles but the expectations for achievement do not change.

When leaders are clear about the non-negotiables, they can hold teams accountable without infringing upon their professional autonomy. Below are examples of how to provide freedom through clarity, or as the DuFours expressed it, "when to be tight and when to be loose." (PLC Conference, OUSD May 2009)

Goal Setting

"Getting results" is the non-negotiable. We all want students to achieve. If they are not achieving at high levels, we want to increase the number that are. However, how we set that target and arrive at the number by school and teacher depends on many factors:

1) student achievement levels at the start of the year
2) what we are held accountable to by the state (AYP)
3) each individual teacher's skill level

For example, schools are expected to meet their target growth in the % Proficient and Advanced (P/A) in order to meet AYP in 2009-2010.[23] This is a *collective* goal and it should foster *collective responsibility*, each member of the community contributing to the best of his/her ability. Maybe there is a new teacher and a more experienced one at the same grade level. Together, they set a target they believe they can meet and that will contribute to the school meeting its overall goal. In this scenario each teacher does not need to have the same target and each grade level will not necessarily have the same target either. As long as collectively, all of the targets together meet the goal.

Example – Goal Setting

3rd grade Teacher A (*first year teaching, no students at P/A on last year's CST)*

Goal*= 25% at Proficient and Advanced at the end of the year*

3rd grade Teacher B *(5 years teaching, 25% were P/A on last year's CST)*

Goal *= 45% of students at Proficient and Advanced on the CST.*

[2323] AYP – Annual Yearly Progress

By working together, the team has a chance of helping 35% of students at their grade level reach benchmark. This seems low but will contribute to meeting the overall school goal because all of the students in 2 through 5 are averaged together to determine the school's percent P/A.

Taking into account where students came in and their own level of experience provides educators with the freedom to set a personal goal that is both attainable and realistic. This is important if people are to work seriously towards meeting the goal. Incremental growth in a positive direction school-wide helps foster feelings of efficacy and helps create excitement for sharing of practice.

Short Term and Long Term Goals

The individual goal that teachers set towards meeting the AYP goal is a long term goal. To feel motivated and inspired along the way, teachers need short term goals as well. A simple example is:

- *80% of my students will increase their fluency rate by 7 words on the next assessment.*

Equally motivating is setting a ***goal for instructional learning***:

- *I will increase the number of lessons I differentiate between now and the next assessment from "zero" to "two".*

Developing Action Plans Based on Goals

Assume a teacher elects to set the following long term instructional goal:

I will become a "master" teacher in differentiation by the end of the year.

After a conversation together you and he jointly decide that "mastery" means:

"*Creating standards-based grade-level appropriate materials for three different groups of students according to the needs identified in their assessment results on power standards and managing the process safely and efficiently in class (meaning that students actually do the work and don't bother each other).*"

Next, he thinks of a specific, measurable, realistic short term goal to support his long term goal:

I will increase the number of lessons I differentiate between now and the next assessment from "zero" to "two".

Specific	**M**easurable	**A**ttainable	**R**esults-oriented	**T**ime Bound
Increase number of lessons…	from zero to two…	*(You checked explicitly and the teacher felt two isn't too many…)*	(Differentiated lessons are meant to impact specific student needs)	…between now and the next assessment

SMART goals are specific and strategic, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and time-bound. For example:

School Goal: *XYZ Middle school will average 93% daily attendance throughout the school year.*

Class Goal: *95% of students will score proficient or advanced solving two variable equations on benchmark exam.*

Student Goal: *I will read one chapter book per month.*

O.K. What are potential **indicators** that this goal has been reached?

- *Students in groups are on task*
- *Student work is completed*
- *Students have different work to complete*

What are the **measures** he wants use to determine if the goal has been reached?

- *Lesson Plans*
- *Classroom observations*
- *Student work*

In the above scenarios goals are powerful because they provide direction for teacher's efforts. However, just as powerful is their potential to measure and thus draw attention to previous effort.[24] This is the focus of data conferences.

Teacher Data Conferences

Teachers set their own goals. But the power of goals only comes through when they have someone to sit with and to examine the indicators and measures, talking about their results. As principals, this feels hard to do. Everyone wants a piece of you. Time is something you have very little of, but Ms. Kean, principal of Acorn Woodland, who increased the number of students at Proficient or Advanced in English Language Arts from 12% to 44% over her four year tenure as principal describes why data conferences are an essential strategy for improving student achievement.

> *"Data conferences are important because setting aside time and giving your full attention to the topic of student results communicates that it is important to you."*

In addition to sending a strong message about what you value by dedicating your most scarce resource to it, setting aside time to talk with you provides teachers with an opportunity to reflect. Deliberate change can't come about without time to think or without someone to help you see what you can't see because you are in the thick of it.

> *"In our schools we are always doing, doing, doing. There is so much urgency. We need to give people a chance to slow down and reflect on their own practice…Teachers develop awareness about their own practice through conversations with others…"*

The first time you schedule data conferences, your staff will most likely feel anxious. So it is important that you state your purpose clearly. **A data conference is NOT a part of a professional evaluation.** A data conference is an opportunity for you and your staff to work together to reach important goals.

[24] Siegle, Del, McCoach Betsy. (2005) Motivating Gifted Students. Prufrock Press Inc.

"My goal for these conversations is to tune and elevate practice. I want teachers to acknowledge, see their own efficacy. .Success builds success. My job is to help teachers see what they are doing that is working… The data conference format creates a space where success is acknowledged and challenges are named. As a principal, it provides me with an opportunity to listen and encourage…"

Inevitably, you will meet with someone who has not met their goals. This person will probably feel very discouraged. In addition to pointing out improvement you have seen or pointing out what you have noticed that the person is doing well, it is important to acknowledge that the goal still needs to be met.

"…Yes, sometimes when teachers don't reach their goals there is discomfort. But you can't be afraid of it. It is important to sit in it. Eventually the challenges will surface. Once a challenge is articulated, we are on the road to addressing it. I can work with the teacher to change/improve the situation."

In a typical data conference once the goal and results are reviewed, teachers are asked to describe what they believe would improve student achievement (something that is within the school's and their sphere of influence). At that time, it is important to help them articulate their theory of action explicitly. Then establish a partnership. Describe what you will provide as support and have them confirm their commitment to the actions they described. As a leader, it is then up to you to follow through by following up with them.

Putting it all together

At the start of the year, teachers will need time to set their goals. Staff development sessions are ideal opportunities to model this process for your staff if they are not yet familiar with it. During that time, they can analyze their data, brainstorm some strategies, and start thinking about some of the support they need. Have them record this work on the forms in the resource section so that by the time they meet with you, they know their data, and are prepared to share their best thinking with you. As the year progresses, you can use the same form just change "learning from last year" to "learning from last 6 weeks," etc.

Managing Through Products

Another way to ensure PLC success is to manage teaching teams by holding them accountable for products.[25] For example, a typical "product" list for a team that meets bi-weekly might look like this:

Give me…	Products
Before School	○ Your team norms ○ The power standards you expect students to master the 1st semester
2nd week	Your SMART goals for the quarter/year.
4th week	The common formative assessment you want to use to monitor student learning.
6th week	Protocols you want to use to look at data.
8th week	Analysis of your CFA results including: 1. class strengths and weaknesses 2. strategies for working with students experiencing difficulty

Note that you are not telling teams what their norms or goals should be. You are just asking them to give you some. Similarly, you haven't told them when to teach what or how but you have expressed to them that you want to know that they have thought about it. You've also made clear that when they get their results you will want some kind of report.

The form in which the team chooses to report their analysis depends on them. However, if you collect a written report, we recommend that you follow up with all teams about their findings/plan in person. This will allow you to understand some of the challenges they face and help them problem-solve if they "get stuck". The resource section contains sample reporting forms that work well.

[25] Dufour, R. (2005)."Closing the Knowing-Doing Gap." *On Common Ground*. Bloomington, IN,: Solution Tree .

Chapter 7 Resources

DATA CONFERENCE PREP

OAKLAND UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
expect Success

Name of Teacher:_____
Subject: _____ **Grade:** _____
Conference Date: _____
Time: _____

I. CHARTING YOUR STUDENTS / Please complete one chart for each of your classes before your data conference. Bring the chart to your data conference. INCLUDE YOUR STUDENTS' SCALED SCORES.

CLASS: _____

Far Below Basic	Scaled Score	Ethnicity	EL	Below Basic	Scaled Score	Ethnicity	EL	BASIC	Scaled Score	Ethnicity	EL	PROFICIENT	Scaled Score	Ethnicity	EL	ADVANCED	Scaled Score	Ethnicity	EL

II. DATA ANALYSIS / What do you notice? What patterns do you see? Where are the majority of your students?

III. REFLECTION / Please reflect on the following before your data conference:

Learning's from 2008-09 & Planning for 2009-10:

Last year…	This year…

DATA CONFERNCE

IV. SMARTE GOALS / ACTION PLAN (Consider one SMART goal per class) We will complete and discuss this at our data conference.

SMARTE GOALS	Strategies	Evidence	Support Needed

Sample Team Report

Developed by Ruth Mitchell, The Education Trust

Team_____ Date_____
Who was present?_____

We looked at these pieces of work:

We used these standards:

What we discovered about the quality of student LEARNING:

What we discovered about the quality of INSTRUCTION:

What are the implications for change in the CLASSROOM and SCHOOL?

What is our action plan to make these changes?

SAMPLE PROCESS FOR DATA CONFERENCES

1. **Self-reflection** – Think about what you have been doing well. In what are would you like to improve your practice?
2. **Goal naming-** Review the data (baseline). Is 10% growth reasonable? 20%? 30%? Given the number of students currently at benchmark, how many will be at benchmark at the end of the year if you set a goal of 20% growth?
3. **Rationale-** Explain why the goal you set is reasonable and realistic.
4. **Action Plan**- Describe the strategies and steps you will take to reach the goal. Why do you think these are the right steps? What are your assumptions about what students need and why? Describe the resources you will need and use to meet the goal.
5. **Timeline-** Is this a 6 week goal? A year-long goal?
6. **Evidence**- What will you look at to determine whether or not you are making adequate progress towards this goal?
7. **Implementation**- Carry out the plan.
8. **Accountability/Reflection-** Examine the evidence you choose to collect. Did you reach your goal? How do you know? What went well? What was difficult? To what extent did you use or follow your action plan? Did any of your assumptions change? What do you want your next step in this area to be?

SMART GOALS DEFINED

"You cannot manage for a goal unless you know – and everybody knows – what the goal is."

Administrators, teachers, and students set goals. We set goals to drive us to achieve better results. Yet goals that are unattainable, vague, or too easy do not challenge us to work harder, and can hinder our progress. SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented and time-bound.

Specific/Strategic

- Well defined
- Clear to anyone that has a basic knowledge of the project

Measurable

- Know if the goal is obtainable and how far away completion is
- Know when it has been achieved

Attainable

- Within the availability of resources, knowledge and time

Results-oriented

- Student achievement is the focus

Time Bound

- Enough time to achieve the goal
- Not too much time, which can affect project performance

Chapter 8:

Data Driven Improvement

Topics
- Using Data to Describe Your Current Reality
- Making Decisions Collectively
- Identifying and Aligning Resources
- Holding Ourselves and our Community Accountable

The same cycle that teachers use in their collaborative teams to plan instruction, analyze data, and set goals can and should be used for school-wide planning. This school-wide planning should involve teachers, administrators, students, and families. Instead of focusing on one class of students, you may choose to focus on a subgroup of students, for example ELs. Instead of planning and reflecting on a "lesson", the school reflects upon school-wide program or practice. Below is an example of how to apply the process towards school-wide change and resource alignment.

Using Data to Describe Your Current Reality

Data tells a story, either by helping to describe your current situation or by helping to describe your school's journey towards improvement. To be able to capitalize on these uses of data, you must, at a MINIMUM: ***Know and be able to describe your school's achievement "picture".***

> *Example:* 45% of our students are at grade level on the CST. Of these, only 10% are African American. The majority of our students that are Proficient and Advanced (P/A) are in grade 5.

Why are these three pieces of information important parts of your "picture"? Because…

1) You need to know how far you are from the target. (AYP goal is 55% P/A)
2) You need to know if you have any gaps. (You do. 65% of your students are African American…)
3) You need to know your strengths. (Something is going on in 5th grade that might benefit the other grades if everyone knew about it.)

The more statements (like the ones above) that your staff can generate based on data, the richer a conversation you can have about the needs that are impacting your school's achievement and what to do about them.

If your staff has looked at the data thoroughly, they will have crafted statements about a number of achievement criteria. For example:

- How the English Language Learners performed (in Math and in English).
- How this year's 6th graders performed compared to last year's 6th graders.

Note: data statements are evidence based only and should NOT include judgments or beliefs about why the conditions exist.

Examples-

Appropriate data statement:

"*More 8th graders were P/A in ELA in '07-'08 (66%) than '08-'09 (42%)"*

NOT an appropriate data statement:

"*The 8th graders last year were smarter than the 8th graders this year."*

Making Decisions Collectively

Once you have thoroughly described your data patterns. You will need to choose a focus. ***What would you like to change about your current data "picture?" What can you learn from it to build upon?***

Taking the list of generated data statements, ask your staff to prioritize what they feel is most important to either change or build upon. The **"N/3" method** described below is a useful process to follow.

1. Count the number of statements then divide the number of statements by 3. (Note: This is not the number of people, but statements!)
2. Take this new number and allow each person to assign that number of points to the ideas on the list according to their individual priorities.
3. Do not allow participants to "stack" points by placing more than one point on each idea.
4. Once all of the points are placed, identify the natural number breaks.[26]

Discuss the pros and cons of each option. If there is not one clear priority from this first cut, repeat the process again, voting only on the top three items.

Identifying and Aligning Resources

Identify the resources at your disposal to change the picture. It is human nature to immediately think about money and "programs", when we think about resources. But really, the most valuable resource that all schools have is the human one. In the example at the start of this chapter, school "A" clearly had a strength in 5th grade. How can 5th grade be a resource? Your staff can brainstorm the options:

- 5th grade teachers might explain and demonstrate some of their strategies at PD
- A few people might observe 5th grade teachers and try to describe what they see them doing
- Someone can ask 5th grade students what their teacher does that helps them learn

The ideas your staff may generate are numerous and because the requests for observation or demonstrations come from their colleagues, there will be less reluctance on the part of the 5th grade teachers to participate. (Some educators may not know or be able to articulate what they are doing that works and feel self-conscious when their grade level is first identified as doing something "right".) The point is that as a community we need to have conversations about what

[26] Source: Doyle & Straus (2004). *Making Meetings Work*

is happening throughout the school, not just in our individual classrooms. This awareness increases competency. The collaborative nature of the conversation makes it feel less threatening.

This does not mean that as a principal, you do not have to think about programs and money. You do have to examine all of your programmatic priorities and ask yourself if they are aligned with your ultimate goal. Are there programs that are "nice-to-haves"? Are there some that are "essential"? Why? How do you know that the programs you are funding are having their intended impact?

These are difficult questions. How much you involve your staff in these conversations depends on:

1) how clear you are in your vision for achievement
2) how well you have communicated that vision
3) how much they buy into your vision for achievement
4) how well you've been able to establish and manage norms for participation
5) how much time you have to schedule these conversations

If the foundation is in place, involving your staff in important decisions will help solidify the outcome for both you and them. They will be able to understand both the responsibility you shoulder and the limitations you have. You will benefit because they will offer a perspective that you don't have but will be valuable moving forward.

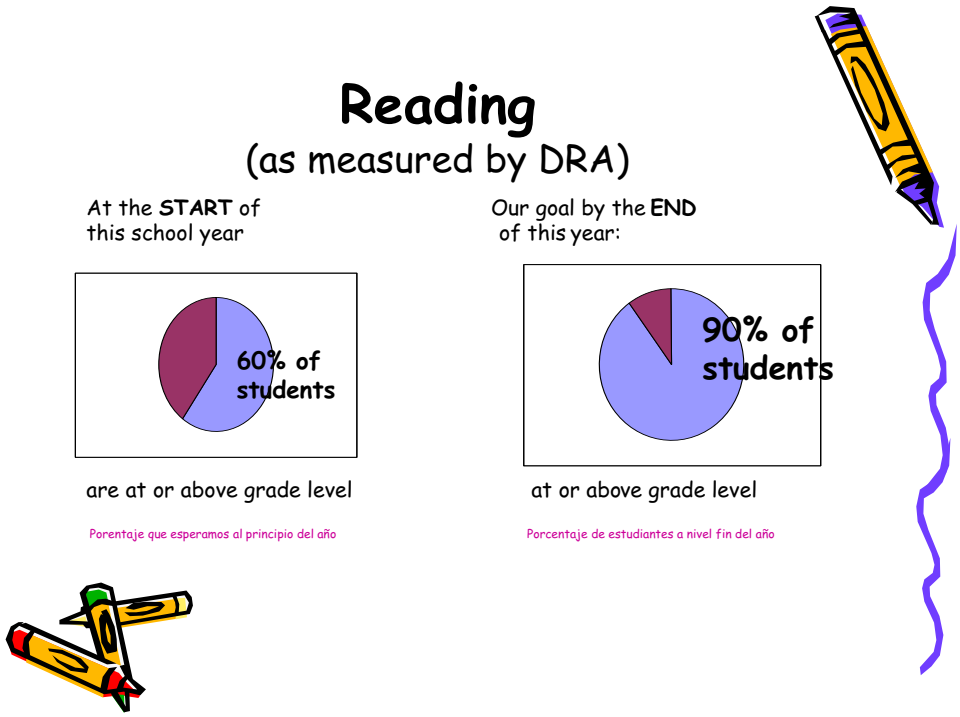
Holding Ourselves and our Community Accountable

Communicate your plan and findings to other stakeholders for the purpose of soliciting their involvement. Just as students have a responsibility to work hard and study. Parents have a responsibility to motivate and encourage. In our district, many parents do not know that their child is at risk. Schools must open honest dialogues about student ability and inform parents when their child is "underperforming" or "at risk".

Schools that have consistently experienced substantial increases in student achievement over time view frequent and upfront dialogue with parents about achievement results as crucial. Even when the data are disappointing, they share:

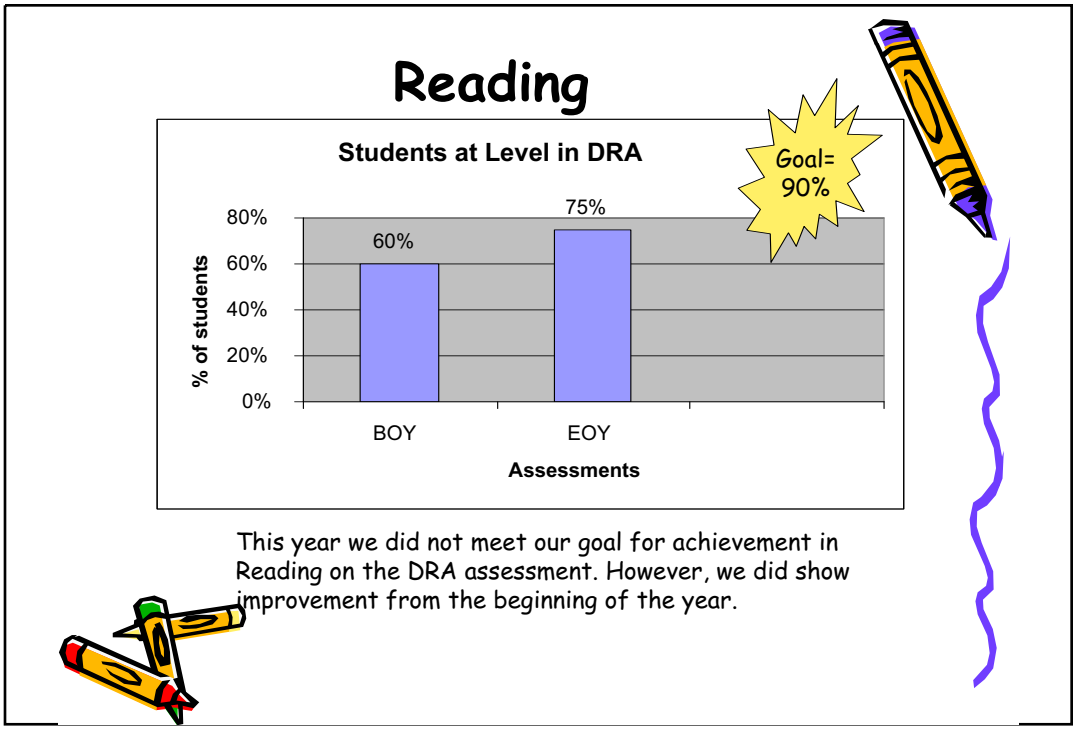
- what the *results* were
- what they *hoped* they had been
- what they have *learned* from reflecting on the results (and what they as educators are going to do about it)
- what they *expect* parents to do about it

On the next few pages are some sample slides that one school shared with parents to communicate the information above.



The slide above was shared at the *beginning* of the year. It names both *baseline* and *goals*. Notice the simple graphs and colorful graphics.

This slide below was shared at the *end* of the year. It names both the school's *hope for* results and *actual* results.



This is an example of how Think College now holds itself accountable to parents. This slide was shared after the slide with the disappointing results.

TCN Strategy to Strengthen Student Achievement 2006-07

- Continue to recruit and retain our strong teachers.
- Increase reading and student academic support at home.
- Focus on a reading and writing campaign to strengthen literacy
- Use data to align appropriate interventions and monitor achievement.
- Use standards-based teaching tools and assessments.
- Work to narrow the gap between English Learner and English Proficient Students .
- Reflect on our actions through the HPSG grant and our Professional Development.

However, Think College Now also holds families accountable by asking them to support their effort with some very *specific* actions:

Parent Strategy 2006-07

Ensure your child's success by:

- Reading at home every day and filling out the reading log.
- Using the computer at home or at the library to work on Accelerated Reader and Stanford Math.
- Following through on teacher suggestions (from school events, parent conferences, & workshops).
- Making sure your child completes his/her homework.
- Making sure your child comes to school rested and on time.
- Attending all required TCN events.
- Volunteering at school.

Chapter 8 Resources

Oakland Unified School District

Teacher Team/Individual CST Data Inquiry Protocol[27]

Part 1: Preparing to Look at Classroom Data

What were your goals for student achievement last year?

What are you curious about in terms of student outcomes from last year? What are you going to look for when you get your classroom data?

What are some of your hopes, worries, expectations, assumptions and/or questions?

Please take about 5 minutes to do a free-write below on these questions.

[27] This protocol is in great part borrowed from the *Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools (BayCES)*

Part 2: Data Analysis (Examine Date and Reflect on Results)

See Data Analysis Guiding Questions Document

What? What are the data telling us?	**So what?** Why is this important?	What additional questions do the findings raise?

Written Reflection:

How are you feeling about the patterns you see? What patterns are making you feel good? What patterns are making you feel concerned? What questions do these patterns bring up?

Part 3: What Next? Implications for Instruction:

Please think about the strategies you employed regularly during the last school year to achieve your instructional goals and list the primary strategies in the table below. On a scale of 1-5 (5=highly effective and 1=not at all effective), rate the effectiveness of each strategy and explain why you think it merits this rating.

Strategy	Rating 1-5	Explanation

How will this information guide my planning and instruction for the coming school year?

Data Analysis Guiding Questions for Teacher Teams: Focus on CST Results

Part 1: Two-Year CST Growth Data & Questions:
Looking at the Growth Summary for your class, answer the following questions:

Section 1:

Elementary: *Use CSTELA scores* **Middle and High School:** *Use CST scores for Class #1*

ELA
In **2007-08**, what percentage of students scored Proficient or Advanced? _____

In **2008-09**, what percentage of students scored Proficient or Advanced? _____

What is the **percentage** increase or decrease? _____

What was the change in the Average Scale Score? _____

In **2007-08**, what percentage of students scored BB or FBB? _____

In **2008-09**, what percentage of students scored BB or FBB? _____

What is the **percentage** increase or decrease? _____

What was the change in the Average Scale Score? _____

Section 2:

Elementary: *Use CST Math scores* **Middle and High School:** *Use CST scores for Class #2*

In **2007-08**, what percentage of students scored Proficient or Advanced? _____

In **2008-09**, what percentage of students scored Proficient or Advanced? _____

What is the **percentage** increase or decrease? _____

What was the change in the Average Scale Score? _____

In **2007-08**, what percentage of students scored BB or FBB? _____

In **2008-09**, what percentage of students scored BB or FBB? _____

What is the **percentage** increase or decrease? _____

What was the change in the Average Scale Score? _____

Part 2: Cluster Data Analysis

After pulling the Group Report for your class in Edusoft, complete the following. Look at the cluster scores for one subject area/grade level, and list the clusters in order from lowest average percent correct to greatest average percent correct.

Subject Area or Grade Level: _____

Reporting Cluster	A Average Percent Correct	B Percent Correct Required for Minimally Proficient	B-A Difference between Required Percent Correct & Average Percent Correct

Which cluster area were your students most successful? (The most successful cluster is the one with the smallest (or most negative) difference between B and A.)

Why do you think this is the case?

Which cluster area were your students least successful? (The most successful cluster is the one with the smallest (or most negative) difference between B and A.)

Why do you think this is the case?

Part 3: Change in Average Scaled Score from 2007-08 to 2008-09

After pulling your student roster using the Longitudinal Tool in Edusoft, complete the following. Put a * next to the name of any student in the "Little or no change" column who scored Proficient or Advanced in both 2005 and 2006.

High Growth (25 pt. + increase)	**Medium Growth** (6-24 pt. increase)	**Little or No Change** (-5 to +5 pt. change)	**Medium Loss** (-6 to -24 pt. decrease)	**High Loss** (-25 pt. or more loss)

How many African American students are represented on each column of this chart? What percentage of the class does that number of students represent? (Write the number of students in the box on the left; write the percentage they represent in the box on the right.)

How many Asian students are represented on each column of this chart? Place the numbers in the appropriate column.

How many Latino students are represented on each column of this chart? Place the numbers in the appropriate column.

Are there any patterns by ethnicity? If so, describe what you see.

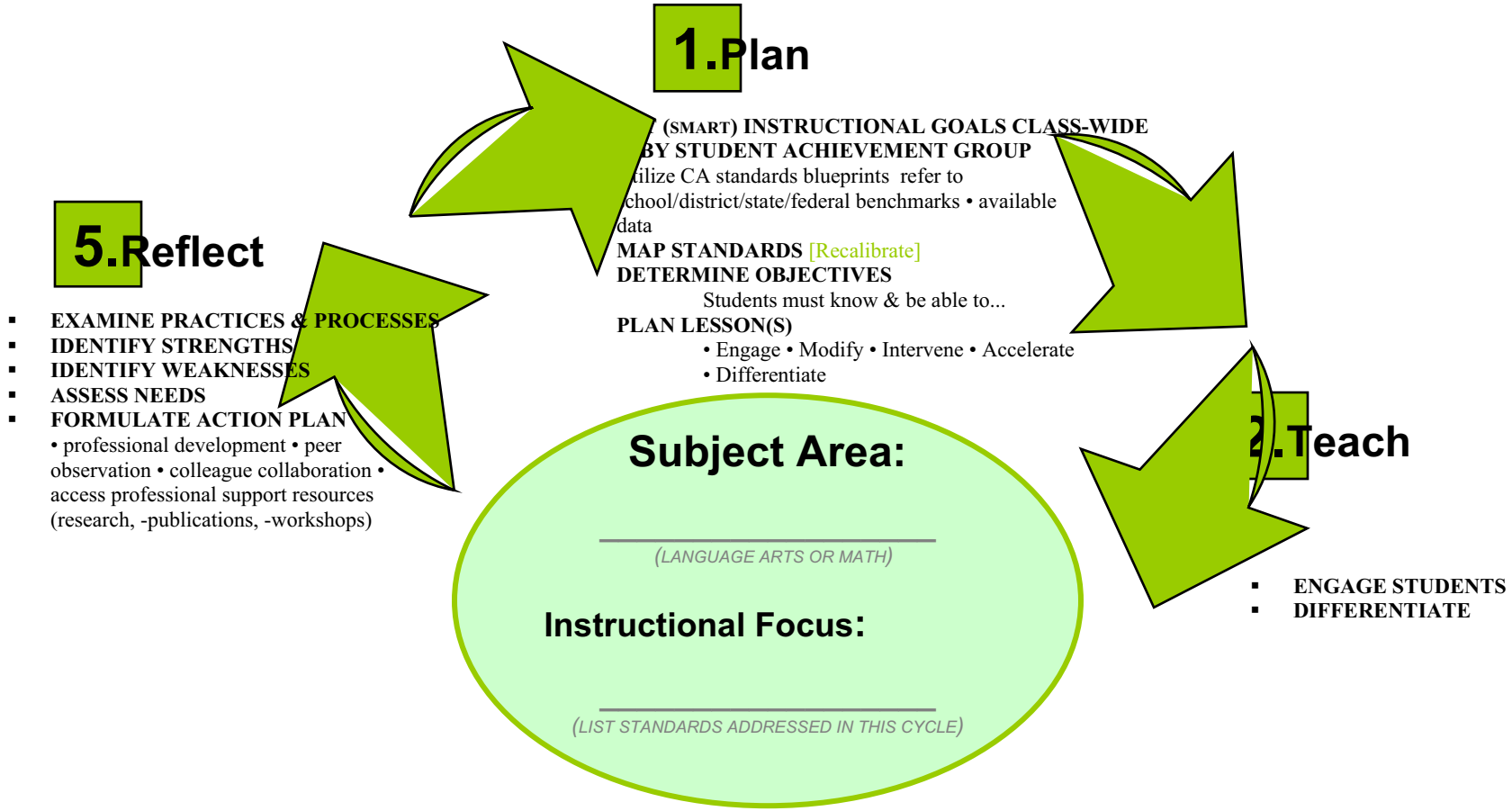
How many female students are represented on each column of this chart? Place the numbers in the appropriate column.

How many male students are represented on each column of this chart? Place the numbers in the appropriate column.

Are there any patterns by gender? If so, describe what you see.

Use your CST growth roster to code your students according to their English fluency level.
Place a circle next to your English Learners.
Place a triangle next to your Redesignated students.
Place a square next to your English Only students.
Place a star next to your Initially Fluent students.

Are there any patterns by English proficiency level? If so, describe what you see.



Cycle Courtesy of International Community School

"4 Lenses" Protocol[28]

Lens#1: Continuous growth for every student

What is the "value-added" in achievement for a cohort of students from one assessment period to the next?

Examples: Are there more 2nd grade students Proficient or Advanced during the 2nd assessment than on the 1st? School-wide do our data show that students are moving *out of* the lower levels and *into* the higher ones?

Lens #2: Consistency of outcomes for students

To what extent are results consistent for different groups of students at the same grade-level, from one assessment period to the next?

Examples: As a grade level, this is important for your teacher teams to know so that they can share practices. If all of one teacher's students' mastered standard 2.3 and no one else did, it would benefit all to learn what he/she did. Similarly, if last year's 4th graders performed better on the midyear exam than this year's 4th graders, it would be important to examine why.

Lens #3: Closing the "achievement gap" AND fast forward underperforming groups

How quickly are we closing the "achievement gap" among student subgroups, regardless of their background, "condition" or circumstance?

Examples: Do African American students outperform Latinos? Are ELL students getting left behind?

Lens #4: Success at the next level.

To what extent are students prepared to make a successful transition to the academic standards at the next level?

Examples: How many of our students are Proficient and/or Advanced?

[28] Courtesy of Performance Fact

Steps for Effective Collective Decision-Making

BEFORE **THE MEETING**

1. Determine the Group's Level of Involvement and Back-up Plan

A. Given your time at hand and the other significance of the decision, what is the best level of involvement for your group?

B. If the group cannot reach a decision through the level of involvement you have encouraged, what is your back-up plan? Will you make the decision yourself? Will you appoint a committee?

2. Assess the Readiness of Your Group to make the decision

Ask yourself, is this group ready to make this decision? Are they prepared and interested? **You may want to survey a couple members of your group to inform the answer.**

3. Choose the Decision Making Method you want to use

Decide which decision making process you will use (i.e., weighted points, N/3, etc.)

4. Establish Parameters

Always think through the parameters, or boundaries, of a decision before leading your group down the decision-making path. For instance, if you are planning a service project, can you first announce the budget, date, time frame and other important parameters?

DURING THE MEETING

1. Present and Define the Decision(s) to be Made

What is the actual decision or decisions to be made by the group? You *must* name each decision that needs to be made explicitly. It is also important to name which decisions will NOT be made if you feel there is a possibility that there are other issues that may surface that people will want to resolve.

Examples:

- *"We are here to decide which intervention curriculum to implement."*
- *"We are NOT going to decide today if the intervention program will be in the morning or after-school."*

2. Announce the Decision-Making Process

Let everyone know the process that you plan to use to reach the decision. Will it include a "voting" system with stacked points? Will you conduct an "advantages/disadvantages" analysis for the top choices?

Don't forget to announce a fallback decision making method in case the group cannot come to a decision in the time allotted.

Example: "I'm hoping to work with you so that the group will make the final decision. However, I want to be clear of my fallback plan should we be unable to decide. In this case, I will take information shared here in order to make the final myself

3. Announce the Parameters of the Decision at Hand

What have you decided to be the parameters, or boundaries of the decision?

Example: You should be aware of the following parameters before we go into the decision-making process: we have only $200 for the training; the date is set for November 18 and 19; and we must end by 5pm on each day.

4. Generate Ideas

Brainstorming

Lead your group in a brainstorm to create a list of ideas with your group. Remember -- during brainstorming, any idea goes, there is no need to explain all ideas until the end, and everyone should be encouraged to share ideas. Try not to gather more than 20 ideas.

Clarifying

Once you have a list of ideas from your group, then ask participants if they would like clarification on any of the ideas before moving on.

5. Prioritize the Ideas

Choose from: • "Assigned Points" • "Weighted Points" • "N/3"

6. Make the Decision

Identify A Choice

Begin with the obvious. Can you find your group's top answer(s) from your list? Look for natural numerical priorities. If you can identify potential top answers, make a proposal to your group and ask for/welcome any objections to your proposal.

Announce/Seek Your Group's Agreement and Next Steps

Always clearly announce and seek conclusive agreement on the final decision. Then determine with the group next steps through a simple proposal/agreement process.

If the final choice/decision is not clear (Fallback Tools):

Mold the List

If there are any objections to your initial assessment of the group's final decision, then look to find the group's final decision by molding your list. First eliminating ideas that the group is willing to erase from the list. Second, begin to identify ideas that cannot be erased but that can be combined with other ideas in logical ways.

- Assign points once again, but only to existing ideas;
- Develop one of the following for your existing ideas:
  - **CRITERIA MATRIX**
  - **ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES LIST**

Tool: The Criteria Matrix

The criteria matrix is a tool used to efficiently narrow the number of ideas for group discussion and agreement. It is most helpful when used on both an individual and a group level after a list of choices have already been brainstormed. Once the group is ready to use the criteria matrix, each group member should first fill out his or her individual sheet, listing the criteria across the top and the options down the side. The object is to weigh each option against each criterion -- if the group member feels that an option meets a certain criterion, he or she should place and "X" in the respective box.

After each group member has finished individually, the facilitator should re-focus the group to complete the criteria matrix together. The group as a whole should then proceed to weigh each option against each criterion, placing an "X" in the box after discussing and coming to a group consensus. When all the options have been considered, the facilitator should then tally the total number of "X"s for each one and note it on the side.

The criteria matrix is used to guide the group's discussion, and by no means must its results be binding. The key is to consider those ideas most relevant to the group's goals and objectives, and to leave room for individual input and group consensus in the decision-making process.

SAMPLE MATRIX

The sample matrix below is being used to decide which type of intervention program to purchase.

CRITERIA:	Accelerated Math	PLATO Math	Connected Math	Ramp-Up
Aligned CA Standards	**X**	**X**		**X**
Intervention Curriculum – For students more than 2 years behind	**X**	**X**		
Research Based	**X**		**X**	
Results in Oakland classrooms	**X**	**X**	**X**	
Cost – Less than $10,000 for 25 students		**X**		**X**
Implementation – Stand alone curriculum	**X**		**X**	**X**
TOTAL	**5**	**4**	**3**	**3**

Based on the matrix, the school should purchase Accelerated Math. If the budget is $10,000 then the school will have to choose an alternative curriculum.

Tool: Advantages and Disadvantages

When trying to select from multiple ideas, often doing a quick review of the options can help sort out the possibilities and make the process of coming to agreement easier for a group. An easy way to conduct this analysis is to simply make a "T" and brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages for each option. A couple of things to remember:

- Make sure that you use the same amount of time on each item that you are reviewing (unless you finish early and the group agrees to move to the next item)
- Focus the group throughout the brainstorm, focusing on the current item
- Ensure that the group is generating the key points for the particular option
- Don't let the group get bogged down—keep it moving

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES

A Final Word:

Leadership

Throughout this manual we've given you a sense of the shared values and vision that a Professional Learning Community holds both for the educators in the community and for the students. We've talked about the importance of collective responsibility and we've described what an inquiry stance looks like when you are examining data and discussing practice. We've given you hints about how to structure the time for collaboration and given you a few tools to help build your staff's capacity in this process as well as talked about how to hold them accountable to it. We've even given you some examples of the messages it is important to give as you do this work and how to best communicate it.

What we have not talked about in detail, however, is leadership. Sure, you as the principal are ultimately responsible for this process. It is up to you to find the resources, allocate the time, pick a focus, etc. But that's not really leadership. Leadership is believing that educating all students is possible when others doubt. It is believing in your staff's capacity to do the work even when they don't believe in it themselves.

Leadership is taking a stand and accepting the consequences for each decision you make. It is saying, "I make no apologies for the personal goals I have set for our students and I am unbending in my high expectations of you as a teacher on my staff." This may be difficult to hear but it is the true essence of accountability, which is essential for assuring high achievement. Without it, all the tools in the world will have little impact.

This does not mean that you do not help your staff when they "get stuck." In fact, part of their success depends on your ability to help them remove obstacles. But it does mean that you are clear every minute of every day that you expect them to find a way. Not on their own, together. For that is the power of collaboration, community, and communication. It is for these rewards that we strive to become or be a Professional Learning Community.

With much admiration and respect for the work you do,

- Tania Gutierrez and all those who support the work of PLCs in OUSD

OUSD PLC Manual Feedback Form

This is a work in progress! Once you've had a chance to engage with this manual, please let us know what you found most useful, what you have questions about, and what resources you wish we had included that we did not.

Below are some of the topics that did not make it into this draft. Please put an "X" by the ones you would like to read about next time:

_____ using data from just a few target students to reflect on practice

_____ sharing data 1-1 with parents

_____ questions to help students reflect on their work

_____ building staff consensus

_____ creating meaningful agendas

_____ other: _____

Which of the topics included in the guide did you find *most* useful? _____

_____

Which of the topics was *least* useful? _____

_____

A question that I have after having read the guide is _____

_____

_____

Please circle the label that best describes you:

I am an (elementary school) (middle school) (high school) principal.

You can send this form or email comments to:

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Oakland, CA 94606
john.hall@ousd.k12.ca.us

Thanks!