

Prepping the Professionals in our PLCs

Curriculum Leadership Development Network of IL ASCD

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Fundamental Assumptions

- We can make a difference: Our schools can be more effective.
- Improving our people is the key to improving our schools.
- Significant school improvement will impact teaching and learning.

3 “Big Ideas” of Being a PLC

1. Focus on Learning

We accept high levels of **learning** for **all** students as the fundamental purpose of our school and therefore are willing to examine all practices in light of their impact on learning.

2. Collaborative Culture

We can achieve our fundamental purpose of high levels of learning for all students only if we work together. We cultivate a collaborative culture through the development of high performing teams.

3. Focus on Results

We assess our effectiveness of achieving high levels of learning for all on the basis of results rather than intentions. Individuals, teams, schools, and districts seek relevant data and information and use that information to promote continuous improvement.

Four Key Questions

1. What is it we expect our students to learn?
2. How will we know when they have learned it?
3. How will we respond when they don't learn?
4. How will we respond when they already learned it?

How do I support this team?

1. Assume positive intentions (seek to understand)
2. Patiently support our culture (It's how we do things around here)
3. Keep your eye on student learning (our 4 key questions)

Astronomy Scenario

As a team leader for Astronomy 2 you are very frustrated. Every week one of the three team members you work with comes a little late, doesn't bring whatever data or material was requested, and is ready to jump off on tangents at a moment's notice. This teacher offers advice and perspectives from what he knows about teaching -- and anecdotes about his students -- but you are trying to get the team to look at student assessments and how they should guide instruction.

Framing: How can you assume positive intentions? What do you need to know?	
What tools might help you patiently support the culture and focus on the 4 key questions?	

Composition 4 Scenario

Your Composition 4 Team is struggling with two team members who are very negative about the time spent in PLC meetings. From the moment they enter the room until they leave, they make it clear that the school district is asking a lot-- too much-- of teachers with all of these forms, using up so much of their grading/prepping time, and spending lots of time discussing/collecting "data." If the school would leave them alone, they would take care of everything. It is hard to conduct the meeting sometimes, because any reference to process, leads to distraction and complaints.

Framing: How can you assume positive intentions? What do you need to know?	
What tools might help you patiently support the culture and focus on the 4 key questions?	

Ten Tools for Tough Teams

Tool Name	Description	Usefulness of this tool
Team Norms	Generate a “Behaviors to Seek/Avoid” list, then choose just a few. One must be: “We will abide by the norms.” Revisit and reaffirm every 2 months.	
Re-frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give yourself 3 reasons why the issue you are worried about might not happen. • Give yourself 3 reasons that if the situation does turn out bad, good things will happen. Now, there is this bad thing that may or may not happen, but if it does, it could have both good and bad outcomes. (Matthew May NYT 3/15/17)	
Team Consensus	Definition of Consensus: when everyone on the team has had a reasonable chance to be heard, and the will of the team is evident -- even to those who most oppose it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nobody gets UN Security Council veto power. 	
Norms Self-Enforcement	Create a plan as a team for how you will kindly but firmly hold each other accountable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonus points for keeping it light-hearted. • “Care Enough to Confront.” 	
Decision Circle	When the team is has explored/learned together and enters a decision-making phase, the TL insists upon hearing from each individual around the circle in turn. Q: “Can you support this proposal?” A: “Yes, I can support this” (“... with reservations” is ok, but not ok to undercut once decision made). <i>Silence is not counted as agreement.</i>	
Time to Talk	Build relationships. Either formally or informally create a time to talk. “I want to hear more about...” “I want to understand better what you mean by...” “I want to help you get more out of our meetings, so...”	

Exploratory Dialogue	Lower the stakes of a team disagreement by clearly labeling times for “exploratory dialogue.” Stop the immediate rush to debating, campaigning, and arguing by creating a decision-free zone for low stakes exploratory research, thinking, and sincere questions. We are a “Learning Community, after all.	
Divide and Conquer	When a person contributes to a team project or work, they take a stake in the group-- and build a bond. Research says when a teammate helps you out (or the team) a bond builds because the helper naturally feels that they wouldn't help if you weren't worth it!	
Protocol Power	Protocols, a set of steps guiding a discussion, break up the natural patterns of dominators and snap judgments. It may feel slow and hard to follow the steps, but they ensure all are heard and that deeper thinking takes place. More voices means wider buy-in.	
Embrace Conflict	What causes conflict? Caring. What concerns and beliefs underlie a conflict? Take the time to explore and find out—learn from each other and then make a decision.	

A Strategy for Establishing Team Norms

Ask team members to think of a past negative experience they have had serving on a team or committee and to identify a specific behavior that prevented that group from being effective: for example, whining and complaining, arriving late and leaving early, being disengaged during the meetings, and so on.

For each negative norm identified by members of your team, establish a positive commitment statement (a norm) your team should adopt that, if everyone adhered to it, would prevent the past negative experience from recurring.

-Reach, Teach, and Inspire

Sample Course Team Norms

Team Interaction Norms

I agree to:

- ❖ focus on what is best for students and to set aside vested interests and concentrate on the “big picture.”
- ❖ listen with respect, empathy, and an open mind.
- ❖ avoid judgmental comments, to criticize ideas and not people and to do so tactfully.
- ❖ participate without dominating.
- ❖ focus all comments to the issue at hand.
- ❖ refrain from sidebar conversations or technology distractions.
- ❖ work toward building consensus.

Responsibilities of Each Team Member

I will:

- adhere to norms.
- support the ultimate decisions of the team
- be informed of what takes place at the team meeting if I am absent.

Agreed to 9/15/16

Data Dive Protocols

Doug Lillydahl - Solution Tree 1/2017

Stage	Rationale
Stage 1: Explore	We LEARN and GROW as professionals as we deliberately examine diverse instructional approaches for future innovation. Everyone contributes.
Stage 2: Decide	We commit team-wide to a strategic instructional response
Stage 3: Act	We ensure that action follows

Dive Tools for Team Leaders

Exploration Tools
<p>High-Middle-Low Matching: <i>find patterns in the moves students make at high-middle- low performance levels</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering a tough Learning Target, gather one high, middle, and low achievement student sample from each teacher • Examine the samples looking for patterns of student thinking or moves at each level. • Brainstorm ideas/instruction that would lead students to the next level up.
<p>Spotlight: <i>brainstorm solutions to a address a problematic Learning Target for students</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The TL provides a spotlighted data point or student sample to the group. • “Think for 5 minutes on how we might go about addressing it, then rotate sharing 1 strategy per person until we exhaust new ideas. No advocating yet-- just idea brainstorming.” • Compile the list. Have team members identify three ideas they think are most worth pursuing. • Decide what to pursue and take action steps.
<p>5 Whys: <i>uncover root causes of student performance in data</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volunteer “Data Scientist” has 1 minute to pick a data point and ask a WHY question. The person to his/her left will answer with “BECAUSE...” The next person will ask a WHY question to that BECAUSE, and the next will respond with a WHY, and so on until you are 5 questions/answers deep. Stop, take notes, and discuss observations. • Repeat as needed. Then choose a “deep cause” to address through action steps.
<p>One Number, One Wonder, One Concern: <i>examine results and raise root questions and concerns</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have each participant come up with these on their own and then raise for the group (in order of all the Numbers-- just a prominent number, then Wonders-- just an insightful question, and finally Concerns-- more a paragraph as needed). • Choose a concern to address through team action steps.
<p>DuFour Reflection Questions: <i>Rick DuFour proposes a series of useful questions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which of <u>our</u> students need additional time and support to reach proficiency on this target? • What is an area where <u>my</u> students struggled? • What strategies or steps were used by my teammates whose students performed well? • In what areas did our team’s students struggle? What do we believe is the cause of the struggle? What is our instructional strategy improvement/experiment for our targeted students?

Loose-Tight Sort

Which of these is worthy of tight leadership (your intervention with parameters) and which are better encouraged as loose (your respect for their autonomy/ownership)?

1. _____ A team wants to meet after school instead of during the established school time.
2. _____ A team is proposing a work day for teachers to catch up on grading so they can concentrate on the PLC more fully at the start of next semester.
3. _____ A team would like to rotate team leadership each week.
4. _____ A team has adopted a practice of spending the first 5 minutes of each meeting focusing on team and school affirmations.
5. _____ A team is choosing to not create the next common formative assessment for next unit so that they can use the next meeting (in 2 weeks) for team reflection on data instead. They will create the next one in 4 weeks.
6. _____ A team is choosing to create the next common formative assessment for next unit so that they can use it to teach the next two weeks instead of taking time for team reflection on data from last weeks CFA.
7. _____ A team has decided not to come up with any common activities for the next unit, but rather to have three pairs of teachers experiment with a different pedagogy and report back.
8. _____ A team is developing a daily calendar of narrative writing prompts first semester for student journaling even though they know that there is an emphasis on argumentative writing in the Common Core tests slated for next year.
9. _____ A team is choosing to not adopt the school SMART goal focused on inferential reading, but is going to make a goal based on literal reading instead.



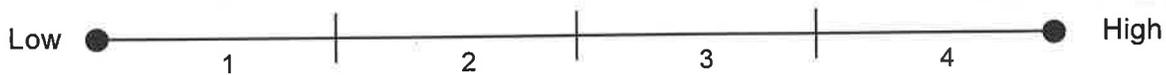
Norms Inventory

Rating the Consistency of My Personal Behavior for This Group

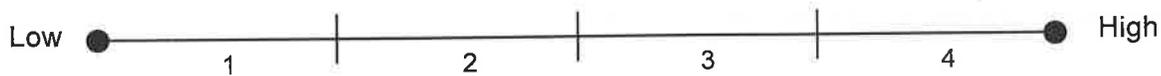
Place a mark on each scale, to reflect your perception of your personal behavior in a specified group of which you are a member.

1. Pausing

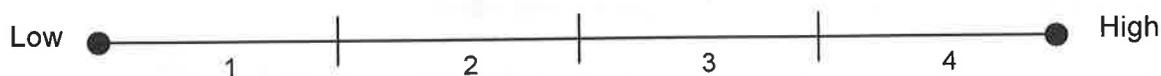
A. I pause after asking questions.



B. I pause after others speak to reflect before responding.



C. I pause before asking questions to permit thoughtful construction.

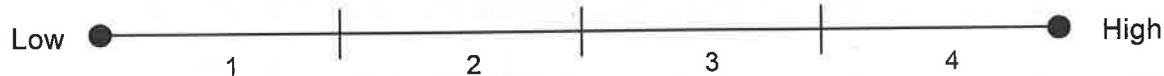


2. Paraphrasing

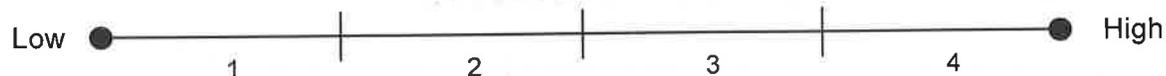
A. I listen and paraphrase to acknowledge and clarify.



B. I listen and paraphrase to summarize and organize.

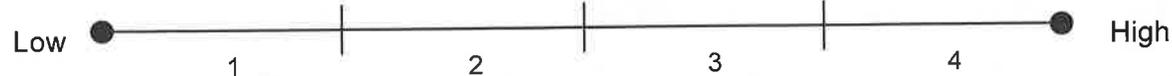


C. I listen and paraphrase to shift levels of abstraction.

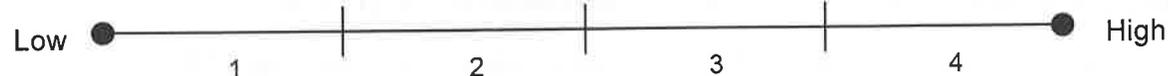


3. Posing Questions

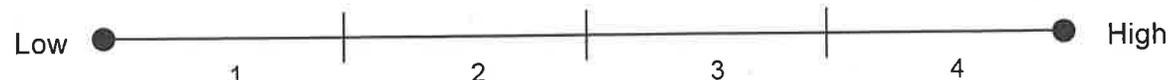
A. I pose questions to explore perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations.



B. I inquire before putting my ideas on the table, or advocating.

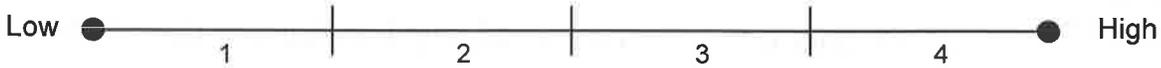


C. I seek specificity of data, assumptions, generalizations, and the meaning of words.

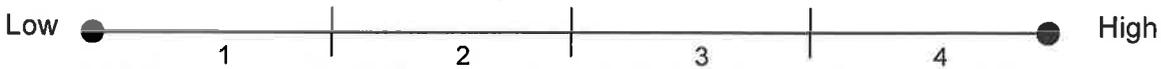


4. Putting Ideas on the Table and Pulling Them Off

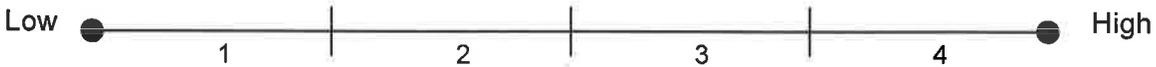
A. I state the intentions of my communications.



B. I provide relevant facts, ideas, opinions, and inferences.



C. I retract or announce modification of previously offered ideas, opinions, and points of view.



5. Providing Data to Structure Conversations

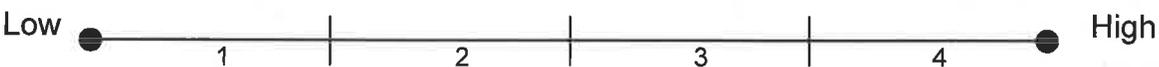
A. I present specific, measurable, and observable data.



B. I present data without judgments, opinions, or inferences.

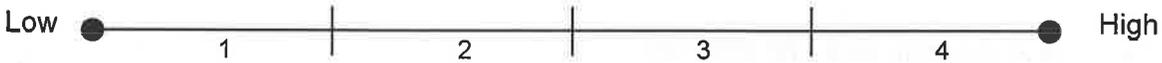


C. I explore the implications and consequences of proposals and plans.

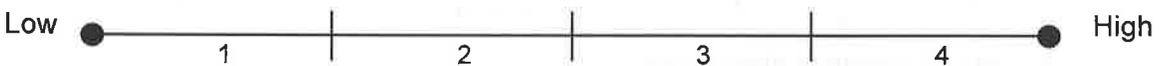


6. Paying Attention to Self and Others

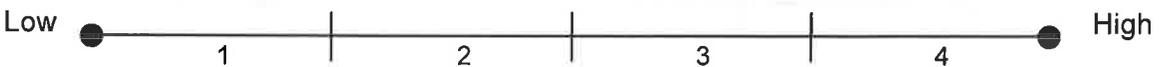
A. I balance participation and open opportunities for others to contribute and respond.



B. I restrain my impulses to respond, react, or rebut at inappropriate times & in ineffective ways.

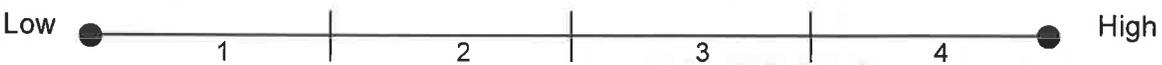


C. I maintain awareness of the group's task, processes, and development.



7. Presuming Positive Intentions

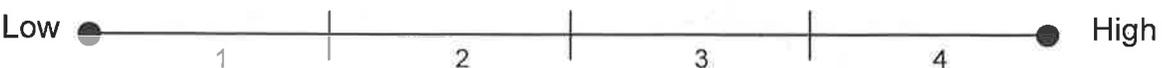
A. I communicate respectfully, whether I agree or disagree.



B. I embed positive presuppositions in my paraphrases, comments, and summaries.



C. I embed positive presuppositions when I inquire or probe for specificity.



Agenda Annotation Activity

Review the sample agendas/minutes below and annotate where you see evidence of the Big Idea of “Focus on Learning.”

Specifically, mark at least one spot where each of the 4 critical questions are being answered and mark the question number.

SAMPLE 1: The 5th Grade ELA Team Agenda

Good morning, Team:

Tomorrow, let's wrap up our short answer Reading CFA activity from last Thursday. It was exactly the kind of conversation we've needed, and I found it so helpful in my understanding of the rubric, my expectations for my students' inferencing, and my ability to intervene when kids fall short of mastery. The one issue that is still a bit unresolved is the translation of the points on the rubric to an overall score for the gradebook. As our next Reading CFA is upon us, let's get this figured out together. Once we do, we can get on to the exciting and meaningful work of creating instructional tools, together.

Tom

PS: Did the copies of the CFA arrive in your boxes?

SAMPLE 2: The 7th Grade Hornet House Team Minutes

Minutes-Taker: Amy

1. James handed out the new expository writing rubric he polished up since our last meeting. Discussion followed about how well it would work for science labs.
 - a. Note: we will keep this on our Google Drive with empty 2 columns for specifics of your discipline. Copy from there and adapt.
 - b. The team agreed to use this rubric within the next week and then bring back student samples to peer grade/calibrate.
2. Jenny shared the vocabulary list and the pretest results for the team's Understanding Africa Unit. The team decided to develop two intervention levels and one enrichment level activities.
 - a. Intervention 1: students who missed over 30% of the straight up knowledge testing
 - i. Jenny and Amy will create a review Kahoot to be used ___???
 - b. Intervention 2: students who struggled in writing the 10 sentences using the vocabulary in context
 - i. James and Alex will create a peer/group activity where they revise and edit each other's sentences
 - c. Enrichment 3: Students who reached mastery on memorization and application
 - i. Will write a letter to King Tut's palace advisor asking for an audience – while using all vocab. Peer edit, too.
3. Administrivia

- a. Conferences signups will be done on Google Forms this year—please call parents of low-achievers who do not reply by FRIDAY!

SAMPLE 3: The 1st Grade Team Agenda

Hi Team,

I would like to propose that we use our meeting to discuss

- our Autumn Unit Review activities and materials for graphing questions. Kids struggled last year on the CFA with this.
- Please bring copies (either paper or electronic) of your reviews from last year. We can develop a few new graphing questions.
- Reading Circle Time activities that would inspire kids to go home and ask their parents to read to them.

Thanks for reading!

Nancy

SAMPLE 4: YOUR TURN!

Imagine it is two weeks from now, and time for a team meeting. Create an ideal agenda and set of minutes that we might see as things are going well on your team. Also Annotate your own agenda/minutes highlighting the connection to our 4 Critical Questions!

Your Awesome Agenda

PLC “How?” Bingo

Directions:

1. Greet a new partner by telling them your name and lens (Your lens _____)
2. Partner A shares how their lens applies to a square.
3. Partner B records A’s name and lens in the square. Then switch roles!

Please claim only 1 square per person!

We adopt team norms and protocols to guide our work together	We set SMART goals based on student data	We prioritize key learning targets for each semester and then unit	We align our prioritized learning targets with district and/or national assessments	We review our curriculum for topics to downsize or eliminate to free up time for priorities
We agree how to best sequence our course content for student learning	We identify necessary prerequisite knowledge for each unit	We create pretests for necessary prerequisite knowledge	We make strategies and systems to help students lacking prerequisites	We develop a series of CFAs that track each student’s mastery of essential learning
We set the proficiency standard for each skill and concept in our CFAs	We use CFA results to reflect on our teaching and commit to steps to improve our instruction	Free Space	We use CFA results to identify each student who needs more time and support	We develop and practice applying the criteria used in judging student work
We teach students the criteria used in judging their work and show them examples	We develop or use common summative assessments to examine our program strengths and weaknesses	We establish the proficiency standard we want each student to achieve on the summative assessments	We formally self-evaluate our adherence to team norms and effectiveness at least twice per year	We set an agenda and keep minutes to help us track decisions
We make decisions together – giving all a voice until the will of the team is clear.	“We do not argue that the PLC process is an easy one, but we know with certainty that it is a journey worth taking”	When colleagues create they engender a shared understanding that was not there previously	By making decisions together for “tight” needs, we challenge and support each other	Until it has been learned, it hasn’t been taught

Your lens is one of these 7:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Focus on Learning | 4) What do we want students to learn? |
| 2. Collaborative Culture | 5) How will we know if they have learned it? |
| 3. Results Orientation | 6) What will we do if they do not learn it? |
| | 7) What will we do if they already know it? |