



# **Professional Learning Communities**



Data Dialog

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# Agenda




- ☞ Introductions /Agenda Review
- ☞ What is a Collaborative Team?
- ☞ What do Collaborative Teams Need?
- ☞ Why Protocols ?
- ☞ Skill development
- ☞ Sample structures to enhance collaboration
- ☞ Data Dialog Protocols for use in collaborative teams
- ☞ Q and A



# **What is collaboration?**

A systematic process in which we  
work together  
**INTERDEPENDENTLY** to  
analyze and impact professional  
practice to improve student  
learning





# What is a Collaborative Team?

## ➤ Traditional Teacher Teams

Hold regular meetings that may sometimes be focused on student learning, but are often focused on other issues.

## ➤ Collaborative teams [ PLC's]

Hold regular meetings with a specific focus on student learning.



# What is a Collaborative Team?

## ❧ Traditional Teacher Teams

Have inconsistent levels of trust between team members, conversations maybe collegial but they tend to avoid conflict. Peacekeeping is important.

## ❧ Collaborative Teams [PLC's]

Have developed high levels of trust amongst group members. Allow for productive conflict in a safe environment. Trust leads to consensus.

# What is a Collaborative Team?

## ❧ Traditional Teacher Teams

Rarely expose teachers to the instructional practices of others. Members tend to rely on their own professional experience when making decisions for their students.

## ⌘ Collaborative Teams [PLC's]

Seek to identify and amplify instructional practices that work. Members are willing to rethink what they do in the classroom based on the work of the group.

# What is a Collaborative Team?

## ❧ Traditional Teacher Teams

Members see themselves as loosely connected colleagues. Teachers largely act as individuals when making instructional decisions.

## ❖ Collaborative Teams [PLC's]

Members see themselves as interdependent sharing ownership of the success of all students.



# Learning Communities: Underlying Beliefs



- ☞ School people, working together, can make real and lasting improvements in their own schools.
- ☞ Educators must help each other turn theories into practice and standards into actual student learning.
- ☞ A key to this effort is the development of a learning community based on public, collaborative, reflective examination of adult and student work.
- ☞ Changing schools happens by changing school culture and not by simply implementing new programs.
- ☞ Collaborative skills can be taught which make efficient use of time, enable every voice to be heard and through structured conversations produces results





# Microlabs



- ☞ Form triads and number off - 1,2,3
- ☞ Each person has equal time to talk
- ☞ The listeners should not interrupt, interpret, paraphrase, analyse, give advice or break in with a personal story
- ☞ Introductions – who you are your role etc



# Question One



☞ One minute think time

☞ Describe a time when you were part of a learning community. What made it so?

☞ What were the ingredients that made it a place you could learn?



## Question Two



- ❧ How do teacher teams function at your school?
- ❧ Are they more like traditional teams or collaborative teams?



# Question Three



❧ How is data used and discussed at your school?

# What is a Learning Community?

- ❧ Learning communities are groups of teachers working together in a conscious effort to adapt their practice to the learning needs of students today, without watering down the standards or lowering expectations.
- ❧ The focus of a learning community is **STUDENT Learning**.



# PLC's - Critical Friends Group Model - History

- ⌘ Begun in 1996 at the Annenberg Institute at Brown University
- ⌘ Began to put the research into practice with schools and teachers in the field
- ⌘ Collaboration between researchers and practitioners in the development of the work
- ⌘ Now a membership organization with an annual meeting and systems for sharing the work developed
- ⌘ [www.schoolreforminitiative.org](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org)

# What do Collaborative Teams Need?

☞ Skilled facilitation

☞ Collaborative understanding and skill

☞ Time

☞ Structures for effective collaboration

# Why Protocols?

- ❧ *A protocol consists of agreed upon guidelines for conversation.*
- ❧ *Structure permits a certain kind of conversation to occur*
- ❧ *A protocol makes it safe to ask challenging questions.*
- ❧ *Using protocols allows groups to build trust by doing substantive work together.*
- ❧ *A protocol ensures that there is equity and parity in terms of how each person's issue is attended to.*
- ❧ *Protocols build in a space for listening, and give people a license to listen.*
- ❧ *Protocols make the most of the time people have*
- .
- ❧ *The point is not to do the protocol well, but to have an in-depth, insightful conversation about teaching and learning.*





# Kinds of Protocols



- ❧ Looking at Student Work
- ❧ Looking at Adult Work
- ❧ Dealing with Dilemmas of Teaching and learning
- ❧ Text Based Protocols
- ❧ Peer Observation



# Norms



Setting the stage for learning ~

∞ Time

∞ Listening

∞ Confidentiality

∞ Decision making

∞ Participation

∞ Expectations

## **Ground Rules ~ Norms ~ Commitments**

- ❧ Start with working norms
- ❧ Then rewrite them as a group
- ❧ Review often
- ❧ Post them
- ❧ Confront behaviors that violate them
- ❧ Revise them regularly
- ❧ Evaluate as you go – exit cards

# Commitments

- ☞ Listen for new understandings - note them
- ☞ Balance Listening and speaking
- ☞ Pay attention to time use
- ☞ If you wonder it ~ask it! – make a note ask later
- ☞ Make space for all voices to be heard
- ☞ Gentle reminders appreciated



# Data Dialog



⌘ ATLAS Looking at data

⌘ Data driven Dialog

⌘ Looking at Data sets



# ATLAS



- ⌘ Getting Started - brief introduction to the data
- ⌘ Describing – “What do you see?” [10]
- ⌘ Interpreting – “What does this suggest?” [10]
- ⌘ Implications for classroom practice [10]
- ⌘ Reflection/Debrief [10]



# Data Dialog



☞ Getting Started – overview and clarifying questions.

☞ PREDICTIONS

☞ OBSERVATIONS

☞ INFERENCES



# Looking at Data Sets



- ❧ A consultancy around data
- ❧ Presenter preparation
- ❧ Data review prior to protocol
- ❧ Protocol with 7 steps
  - ❧ Presentation, clarifying questions, probing questions, presenters response, participant discussion, presenter reponse, debrief.



# The Learning Community Seminar

This session has been a snapshot

Generally taught as a 3 credit course

Prepares participants to work collaboratively to:

- ❧ Examine student work
- ❧ Examine adult work
- ❧ Learn from selected texts
- ❧ Address dilemmas of teaching and learning



# How to find out more?



☞ School Reform Initiative

☞ <http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org>

☞ Margaret MacLean

☞ <http://www.teachercollaboration.org>

☞ [margaret.maclean@ruraledu.org](mailto:margaret.maclean@ruraledu.org)