Professional Learning Community

PLC

Handbook


improvement
evidence
efficient
together
RESULTS
resources
community
alignment
Vision
culture
measure
mission
students
teacher
accountable
ensure
system
future
leader
instruction
leadership
curriculum
support
TPEP
data
results
Quality
expectations
PLCs
goals
learning
vision
plan
systems
CCSS
Data
initiatives
teachers
COLLABORATION
conversations
collaboration
Integrity
achieve
focus
principals
strategies
quality
high-leverage
LEARNING
growth
assess
Inquiry
Collaboration
communication

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Section 1: The PLC Overview

Professional Learning Communities: An Introduction

What is a PLC?

An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. PLCs operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous, job-embedded learning for educators.

--DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010

So what does it mean to work collaboratively?

Collaboration is a SYSTEMATIC process in which we work together INTERDEPENDENTLY to analyze and IMPACT professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results.

--DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2002

Much like the members of a rowing team…if one of us fails, we all fail.

The Three "Big Ideas" Behind the PLC Philosophy

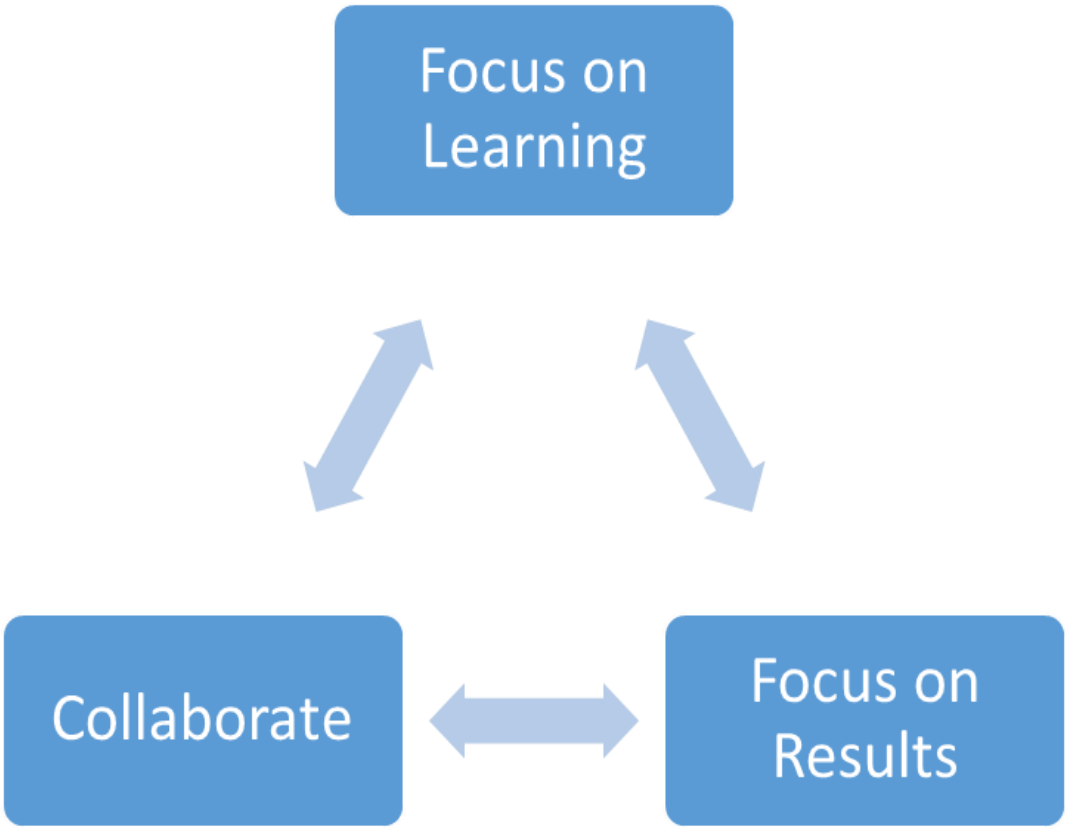
The essence of the PLC process is captured in three big ideas:

The purpose of our school is to ensure all students learn at high levels.

Helping all students learn requires a collaborative and collective effort.

To assess our effectiveness in helping all students learn we must focus on results—evidence of student learning—and use results to inform and improve our professional practice and respond to students who need intervention or enrichment.

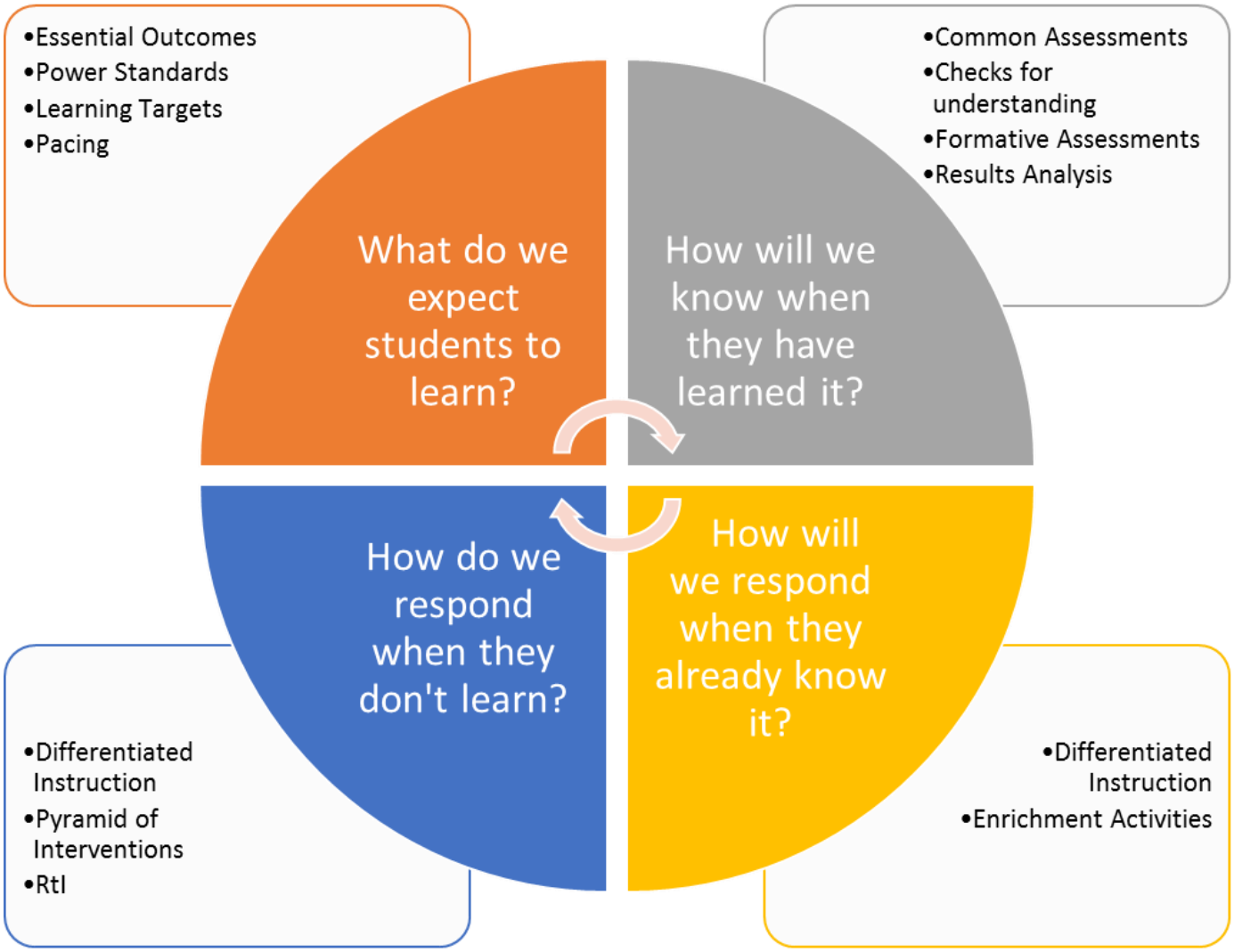
— Richard DuFour, *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*



Cultural Shifts in a Professional Learning Community

A Shift in Fundamental Purpose	
From a focus on teaching . . .	to a focus on learning
From emphasis on what was taught . . .	to a fixation on what students learned
From coverage of content . . .	to demonstration of proficiency
From providing individual teachers with curriculum documents such as state standards and curriculum guides . . .	to engaging collaborative teams in building shared knowledge regarding essential curriculum
A Shift in Use of Assessments	
From infrequent summative assessments . . .	to frequent common formative assessments
From assessments to determine which students failed to learn by the deadline . . .	to assessments to identify students who need additional time and support
From assessments used to reward and punish students . . .	to assessments used to inform and motivate students
From assessing many things infrequently . . .	to assessing a few things frequently
From individual teacher assessments . . .	to assessments developed jointly by collaborative teams
From each teacher determining the criteria to be used in assessing student work . . .	to collaborative teams clarifying the criteria and ensuring consistency among team members when assessing student work
From an over-reliance on one kind of assessment . . .	to balanced assessments
From focusing on average scores . . .	to monitoring each student's proficiency in every essential skill
A Shift in the Response When Students Don't Learn	
From individual teachers determining the appropriate response . . .	to a systematic response that ensures support for every student
From fixed time and support for learning . . .	to time and support for learning as variables
From remediation . . .	to intervention
From invitational support outside of the school day . . .	to directed (that is, required) support occurring during the school day
From one opportunity to demonstrate learning . . .	to multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning

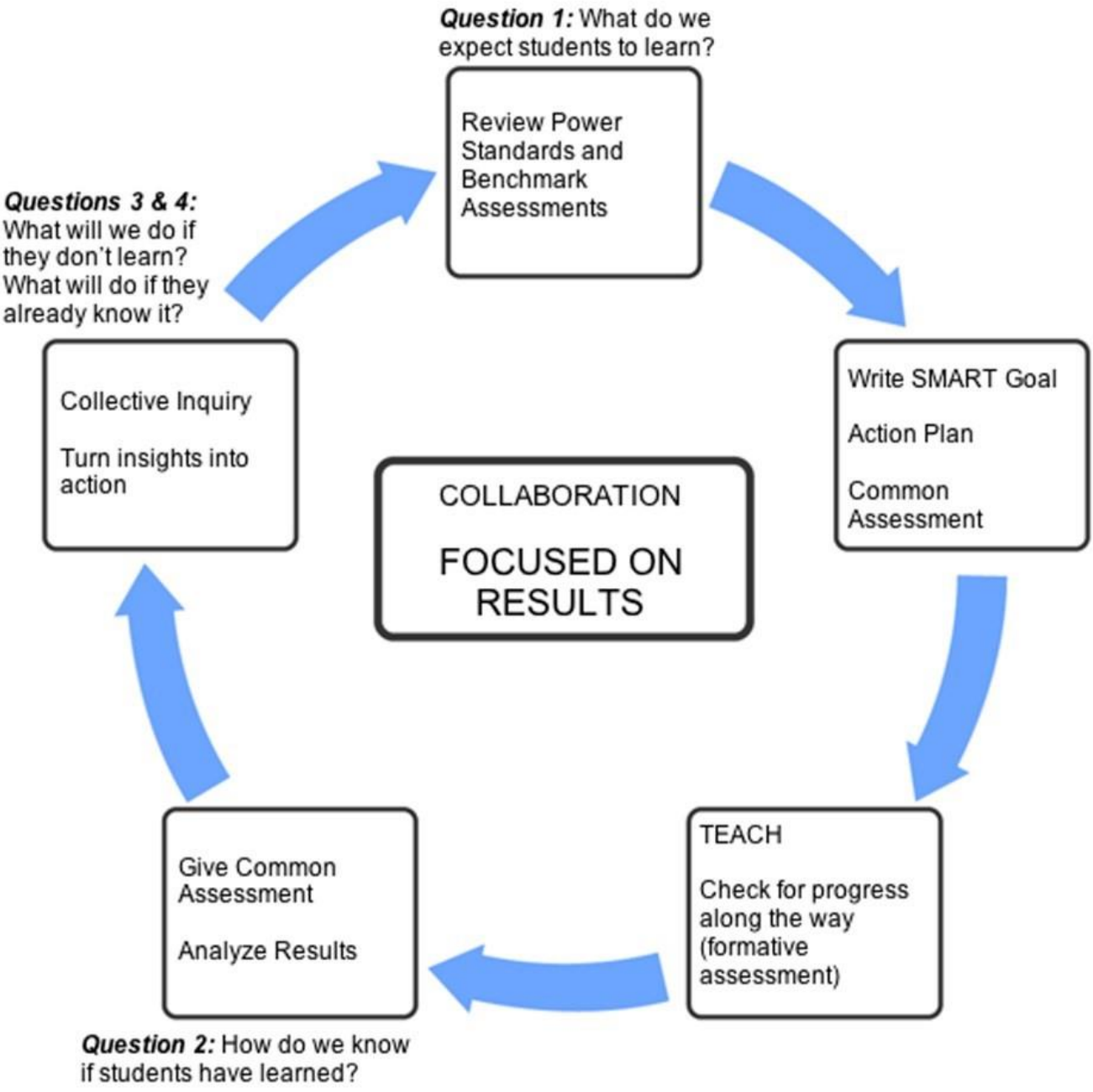
Four Critical Questions to Guide PLCs



Professional Learning Community

Model

PLC Cycle



Understanding the PLC Team Process

Step 1: Proceed with our Foundation in Mind

- Revisit our Mission and Vision
- Revisit values and our group norms
- Revisit our District and School Worthy Targets

Step 2: Examine the Common Core Standards

- Unpack the standards (See Resources Section)
- Look at Assessment Templates
- Examine Curriculum maps / pacing guides

Step 3: Identify Specific Skills from the Standards

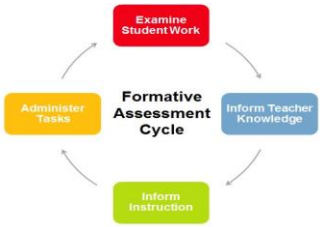
- These skills are your learning targets
- The targets are what you as a PLC deem important for your students to know by the unit's end

Step 4: Create a Common Formative Assessment

- All involved agree on format, number of questions, implementation, dates, and how data will be collected
- Administer the same test (Pre- and Post-)
- Examine data after the Pre-Assessment to set
- SMART goal for the Post-Assessment

Step 5: Teach the Unit

- Use performance from the pre-assessment
- Use formative assessments throughout the unit to Understand student thinking: QuickWrite, Fist to Five, Total Participation Techniques, etc.



Step 6: Analyze the Data from the Post-Assessment

- Collect and chart the data
- Compare the data to the SMART Goals and "Instructional Practices" form Where do you see strengths/obstacles?
- Where are the students successful? ○ Which Questions? ○ Which Classrooms?

Step 7: Plan Re-Engagement and Enrichment

- What are the students' intervention needs?
- Pair those needs with teachers' strengths
- If the students showed mastery, how can it be Extended with research or creativity?

Step 8: That's It! Now, Repeat for the Next Unit

- Using your norms of collaboration, you have: ○ Identified what students were to learn ○ Identified how it would be assessed ○ Re-engaged those who misunderstood ○ Enriched those who needed it

What Should PLC Teams Actually Do At Meetings?

Time & Place

When do we meet?
Where do we meet?
How do we determine this?
Will we set a beginning and ending time?
Will we start and end on time?

Listening

How will we encourage listening?
How will we be respectful of others?

Decision-Making

How will we make decisions?
Will we reach decisions by consensus?
How will we deal with conflicts?
How are we keeping students' best interests in all decisions?

Expectations

Follow the norms created by the PLC.
What do we expect from all members?

Section 2: Getting Started with Teams

"Probably an early vertical team."

Establishing the purpose of your PLC?

Clarifying the Work Teams Must Accomplish

"Administrators and teachers should work together to identify the 'right work' of teams—the work with the greatest potential to have both a positive impact on student learning and the capacity of staff to function as members of high-performing teams"

--DuFour & Marzano, *Leaders of Learning* (2011, p. 80)

In order to accomplish the above foundation in establishing PLCs, each team needs to establish their own Purpose Statement. This statement describes the reason the team exists, the work they are engaged in that will increase student learning, and allow the staff to function as a member of an effective team.

In order to get a group to agree on the purpose of their team and the work in which they will engage, teams can use an activity called, "Groups of Increasingly Large Size" or G.O.I.L.S.

Using the form on the next page, each team member takes 3 minutes to individually write their response to the question, "What is the purpose of _____team?" The answer must fit into the box provided.

After 3 minutes the individuals pair up and have 3 minutes to combine their 2 statements into one (again, it must fit into the box provided).

After 3 minutes the pairs match up to create groups of 4 and combine the 2 statements into one.

Continue to double the group size and combining statements until the entire group is working to combine the 2 final statements into 1 working document.

This exercise is to get the big ideas down, not to spend time "wordsmithing."

Groups of Increasingly Large Size (G.O.I.L.S.)

	Your Response	People	People	People
What is the purpose of _____ team?				
	People	First Draft		

Adapted from Farmer 2015.solution-tree.com/reproducible

the G.O.I.L.S. Activity

Grade Level Facilitator PLC
To bring unity among all grade levels and specials in the building and disseminate decisions and information among all staff.

PBS Team
Our goal at is to implement and maintain a positive behavioral support system (PBS) and a social culture needed for all students to achieve social, emotional, and academic success.

Vertical Articulation Team
Cross-Curriculum grade level collaboration to ensure student success and overall school improvement

First Grade PLC
To plan, share, and collaborate for student growth.
Share ideas and support each other in reflection and building cohesive curriculum.

Second Grade PLC
To collaborate with our team on curriculum and pacing; share ideas and strategies, provide support and discuss upcoming events.

Third Grade PLC
Professional collaboration between peers and administration to improve student learning and facilitate clear communication and learning.

Fourth Grade PLC
To Collaborate as a fourth grade team. To better the understanding of our students in academics and citizenship.

Fifth Grade PLC
The purpose of the 5th grade team is to communicate honestly amongst each other and share our knowledge and expertise to support both staff and students with effective instruction to create optimal learning experiences in a safe and respectful environment.

Specials PLC
To Collaborate, Share and Enhance the general curriculum providing foundation knowledge for creative expression.

First Semester Team Collaboration Outcomes

School Mission Statement:

_____
_____
_____

School SMART Goal:

_____
_____
_____

To achieve this goal, we agree to be "tight" about the following team outcomes:

Purpose Statement

- By September XX, teams will collaboratively create/revise their team "Statement of Purpose"
- Statement will be uploaded to the Digital Professional Learning Community notebook

Team Norms:

- By September XX, teams will collaboratively create/revise their team meeting norms
- Norms will be reviewed at the beginning of every meeting and revised as needed
- Included in the norms will be protocols for when team norms are violated Norms will be uploaded into the Community Notebook

SMART Goal(s)

- By October XX, teams will write long-term SMART goal(s) for the year and short –term SMART goals for a First Unit

- Goals will be uploaded to the Community Notebook in order to hold each other mutually accountable to achieve the goals

Essential Standards

- By October XX, teams will collaboratively identify essential learning standards for unit or assigned area
- Identified standards should prepare students for the success at the next level
- For each standard the team will write the standard in kid friendly terms, determine the level of rigor, identify prior skills/academic vocabulary needed, create the common assessment that will be used to measure mastery, create a timeline for teaching standard

Common Assessments

- Common assessments will be given to measure student mastery of essential standards
- Teams will collaboratively create and give one common assessment
- Teams will collectively use the Data Protocol Questions when reviewing common assessment results

Reengagement/Enrichment

- Teams will offer support to students needing extra support
- Teams will offer enrichment activities to students who have mastered the essential standards

Student/Parent Communication

- Teachers will update grades at least once each week
- Students will monitor their progress towards meeting their essential skill standards

Areas of Staff Learning

- Learning to work as a Professional Learning Community to embrace the 5 Essential Elements

1. Work in collaborative teams and take collective responsibility for student learning rather than work in isolation
2. Implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum, unit by unit

3. Monitor student learning through an ongoing assessment process that includes frequent, team developed common formative assessments
4. Use the results of common assessments to: improve individual practice, build team's capacity to achieve its goals, intervene/extend on behalf of students
5. Provide systematic interventions and enrichment

Suggested PLC Roles

In order to be productive, it is imperative that the members of the PLC assume responsibility for making the group's time effective. This is accomplished by assigning roles to the group members. A PLC may have as many or as few roles as they would like. Be sure to share the responsibility of the work. It is up to everyone to assure the group meets its goal (commitment).

Within the PLC, decide how often the group members would like to change roles. Some groups like to change often. This spreads the various responsibilities throughout the group. Others change roles when the SMART goal changes. This allows member to know their role well.

As a PLC you may decide to have as many assigned roles as you would like. What is important is that it is clear who is doing what in the PLC. A lack of clarity is detrimental to the PLC process. Everyone needs to see how they will contribute to the work of the group (Commitment) and how they will impact the group's learning (Accountability). Be sure that the group understand the connection of their role to the group's purpose and student achievement.

Here are a few role descriptions and responsibilities. Your group may develop other roles. Start with what makes sense to the members of your PLC.

Facilitator - The Facilitator is the Traffic Cop. This role helps the group move forward. The facilitator makes sure that everyone is participating and understands where the group is in the process. They also assure that everyone understands what the group is working to accomplish at each point of the meeting. Sometime administrators ask the PLC to have a **Team Leader**. The facilitator may or may not be the team leader. Usually the team leader is responsible for communicating the group's work and progress to others.

Recorder/Note Taker - This role documents the group's work. It is essential that the group's thoughts and conversations are visible. If the group's work is recorded, it can hold the group accountable to completing real work. The note taker should be documenting the

groups big ideas, stopping to ask the group to further clarify ideas so that they are in a form that may be expressed in writing. If the recorder struggles to capture an idea, "then there is still more clarification and work to be done to create a mutual understanding " that may be expressed in writing (Sparks, 2008, p. 38). It is often helpful to do this on a computer. By typing the notes in a Google doc, all participants will have access to the group's work. Notes may be typed directly into the agenda. This also helps to keep the group on track.

Agenda Keeper or Timekeeper - This is a great role for the control freak in the group. At the beginning of the meeting, this person will review the agenda and may ask the group to set approximate times it wants to spend on each agenda item. Remember these times are goals, not rules. If a part of the meeting takes longer then the time initially agreed on, the timekeeper will alert the group to this and see if they want to continue or move ahead to the next item. Always remind the group of the goal/outcome they set and keep the group moving at a pace that will allow the group to reach that outcome. PLCs work when they are productive. This role can be an essential accountability piece that helps the group reach its commitments. This person makes sure the meeting starts and stops on time and that it is moves ahead. Each meeting ends by creating the agenda for the next meeting. Remember to plan the agenda backwards - start with the end in mind.

Norms Manager/Process Checker - Everyone in the group is responsible for maintaining the norms (accountability). The Norms Manager reminds the group of the norms at the beginning, asks if there is a focus norm, reminds the group during the work of the norms (if needed), and helps the group to reflect at the end on their adherence to the norms. They also help the group to reflect on the process they have selected to do the work and its effectiveness.

Charts and Visuals (The Visualizer) - This is a fun role for someone with an artistic flair or the person that needs to be up and active during a meeting. Tracking the groups work (thoughts and ideas) on chart paper may be a great accountability piece. Charting the participants ideas help them to feel valued and heard; they are able to "see" their participation. It also helps to maintain the group's focus. Finally, ideas from quieter participants can be charted. This help dominant group member to "hear" the person and adds importance to what the quieter member shared. "Effective visuals help your team own the work and refocus when the conversation begins to stray" (Sparks, 2008). Here is a link to helpful tips for this role. Note - **Use brown, black, or blue markers as they are the easiest for people to read. Use red only when the group wants to mark an idea as important.*

Materials Organizer - This is a great job to share. This person makes sure the group has markers and chart paper, copies of anything they need (such as agendas), and other items necessary to the meeting.

Encourager - The **Encourager** role come from Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR). This person encourages the group with positive statements and names and notices positive behaviors that benefited the group. “That was a great idea.” “Wonderful job of adding onto Juan’s idea.” “Super connection.” “Great work today team!’ “I notice you were really focused in today’s meeting. You were nodding and added several ideas to the action plan” “Great meeting everyone! High-five each person before you leave.” This is a fun role. Everyone loves a compliment and it can bring a lot of energy to the group.

Effective Group Member - It is important that each member is conscious of their actions. An Effective Group Member arrives on time prepared, contributes ideas, keeps the meeting focused on the purpose, and holds group members accountable to the norms.

Nutritional Coordinator or Gastro Engineer - Aren’t all meetings better with a healthy snack? This is an example of a role that your PLC might want to create.

During your debrief after each meeting, look for patterns that the group wants to change. The PLC may create a role to address a specific need of the group. For example, your group may determine that they need a **Negativity Eliminator**. This person will listen for negative statements and reframe them into positive one.

"Solution Tree | The Collaborative Teacher." 2011. 5 Aug. 2012 <http://www.solution-tree.com/the-collaborativeteacher.html>

Section 3: Establishing Norms

"Enforcing the norms has been a lot easier since I thought of using the mute."

Why Should We Create Norms?

Teams improve their ability to grapple with the critical questions when they clarify the norms that will guide their work. These collective commitments represent the "promises we make to ourselves and others, promises that underpin two critical aspects of teams—commitment and trust" (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 60).

Explicit team norms help to increase the emotional intelligence of the group by cultivating trust, a sense of group identity, and belief in group efficacy (Druskat & Wolff, 2001).

"When self-management norms are explicit and practiced over time, team effectiveness improves dramatically, as does the experience of team members themselves. Being on the team becomes rewarding in itself—and those positive emotions provide energy and motivation for accomplishing the team's goals" (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2004, p. 182).

Norms can help clarify expectations, promote open dialogue, and serve as a powerful tool for holding members accountable (Lencioni, 2005).

Referring back to the norms can help "the members of a group to 're-member,' to once again take out membership in what the group values and stands for; to 'remember,' to bring the group back into one cooperating whole" (Kegan & Lahey, 2001, p. 194).

Inattention to establishing specific team norms is one of the major reasons teams fail (Blanchard, 2007).

After looking at over a hundred teams for more than a year, researchers concluded that understanding and influencing group norms were the keys to improving teams. Researchers noted two norms that all good teams generally shared. First, members spoke in roughly the same proportion. Second, the good teams were skilled at intuiting how others felt based on their tone of voice, expressions, and other nonverbal cues (Duhigg, 2016).

Developing Norms

Comments to the Facilitator: This activity will enable a group to develop a set of operating norms or ground rules. In existing groups, anonymity will help ensure that everyone is able to express their ideas freely. For this reason, it is essential to provide pens or pencils or to ask that everyone use the same type of writing implement.

Supplies: Index cards, pens or pencils, poster paper, display board, tape, tacks

Time: Two hours

Directions

Explain to the group that effective groups generally have a set of norms that govern individual behavior, facilitate the work of the group, and enable the group to accomplish its task.

Provide examples of norms.

Recommend to the group that it establish a set of norms:

To ensure that all individuals have the opportunity to contribute in the meeting;

To increase productivity and effectiveness; and

To facilitate the achievement of its goals.

Give five index cards and the same kind of writing tool to each person in the group.

Ask each person to reflect on and record behaviors they consider ideal behaviors for a group. Ask them to write one idea on each of their cards. Time: 10 minutes.

Shuffle all the cards together. Every effort should be made to provide anonymity for individuals, especially if the group has worked together before.

Turn cards face up and read each card aloud. Allow time for the group members to discuss each idea. Tape or tack each card to a display board so that all group mem- bers can see it. As each card is read aloud, ask the group to determine if it is similar to another idea that already has been expressed. Cards with similar ideas should be grouped together.

When all of the cards have been sorted, ask the group to write the norm suggested by each group of cards. Have one group member record these new norms on a large sheet of paper.

Review the proposed norms with the group. Determine whether the group can sup- port the norms before the group adopts them.

When Establishing Norms, Consider:	Proposed Norm
Time ☐ When do we meet? ☐ Will we set a beginning and ending time? ☐ Will we start and end on time?	
Listening ☐ How will we encourage listening? ☐ How will we discourage interrupting?	
Confidentiality ☐ Will the meetings be open? ☐ Will what we say in the meeting be held in confidence? ☐ What can be said after the meeting?	
Decision Making How will we make decisions? ☐ Are we an advisory or a decision-making body? ☐ Will we reach decisions by consensus? ☐ How will we deal with conflicts?	
Participation How will we encourage everyone's participation? Will we have an attendance policy?	

Ex pectations What do we expect from members? Are there requirements for participation?	

Survey on Team Norms

Team:_____ Date:_____

Use the following ratings to honestly reflect on your experiences as a member of a collaborative team:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4

1. ___ I know the norms and protocols established by my team.

   Comments: _____

2. ___ Members of my team are living up to the established norms and protocols.

   Comments: _____

3. ___ Our team maintains focus on the established team goal(s).

   Comments: _____

4. ___ Our team is making progress toward the achievement of our goal(s).

   Comments: _____

5. ___ The team is having a positive impact on my classroom practice.

   Comments: _____

Section 4: Developing SMART Goals

"My goal for tonight is purposeless, ambiguous, immeasurable, unaccounted-for TV viewing for as long as I feel like it. I think that's attainable."

Massachusetts Department of ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

What makes a Goal "SMARTer"?[1]

Good goals help educators, schools and districts improve. That is why the educator evaluation regulations require educators to develop goals that are specific, actionable and measurable. They require, too, that goals be accompanied by action plans with benchmarks to assess progress.

The "SMART" Goal framework is a useful tool that individuals and teams can use to craft effective goals and action plans:

S = **S**pecific and **S**trategic

M = **M**easurable

A = **A**ction Oriented

R = **R**igorous, **R**ealistic and **R**esults-focused (**the 3 R's**)

T = **T**imed and **T**racked

Goals with an action plan and benchmarks that have these characteristics are "SMART".

A practical example some of us have experienced in our personal lives can make clear how this SMART goal framework can help turn hopes into actions that have results.

First, an example of *not* being "SMART" with goals: *I will lose weight and get in condition.*

Getting SMARTer: *Between March 15 and Memorial Day, I will lose 10 pounds and be able to run 1 mile non-stop.*

The hope is now a goal that meets most of the SMART Framework criteria:

It's **S**pecific and Strategic = 10 pounds, 1 mile

It's **M**easurable = pounds, miles

It's **A**ction-oriented = lose, run

It's got the 3 **R**'s = weight loss and running distance

It's **T**imed = 10 weeks

SMART enough: To make the goal really "SMART," though, we need to add an action plan and benchmarks. They make sure the goal meets that final criteria, "Tracked." They also strengthen the other criteria, especially when the benchmarks include "process" benchmarks for tracking progress on the key actions and "outcome" benchmarks that track early evidence of change and/or progress toward the ultimate goal.

Key Actions:

- reduce my daily calorie intake to fewer than 1,000 calories for each of 10 weeks.
- walk 15 minutes a day; increase my time by 5 minutes a week for the next 4 weeks.
- starting in week 5, run and walk in intervals for 30 minutes, increasing the proportion of time spent running instead of walking until I can run a mile, non-stop, by the end of week 10.

Benchmarks:

- For process, maintain a daily record of calorie intake and exercise.
- For outcome, bi-weekly weight loss and running distance targets (e.g., After 2 wks: 2 lbs/0 miles; 4 wks: 4 lbs/0 miles; 6 wks: 6lbs/.2 mi; 8 wks: 8 lbs/.4 miles

SMART goal statements with action plans and benchmarks will make a difference in schools.

S = Specific and Strategic

Goals need to be straightforward and clearly written, with sufficient specificity to determine whether or not they have been achieved. A goal is strategic when it serves an important purpose of the school or district as a whole, and addresses something that is likely to have a big impact on our overall vision.

M = Measurable

If we can't measure it, we can't manage it. What measures of quantity, quality, and/or impact will we use to determine that we've achieved the goal? And how will we measure progress along the way? Progress toward achieving the goal is typically measured through

"benchmarks." Some benchmarks focus on the process: are we doing what we said we were going to do? Other benchmarks focus on the outcome: are we seeing early signs of progress toward the results?

A = Action Oriented

Goals have active, not passive verbs. And the action steps attached to them tell us "who" is doing "what". Without clarity about what we're actually going to do to achieve the goal, a goal is only a hope with little chance of being achieved. Making clear the key actions required to achieve a goal helps everyone see how their part of the work is connected – to other parts of the work and to a larger purpose. Knowing that helps people stay focused and energized, rather than fragmented and uncertain.

R = Rigorous, Realistic and Results-focused (the "3 R's")

A goal is not an activity: a goal makes clear what will be different as a result of achieving the goal. A goal needs to describe a realistic, yet ambitious result. It needs to stretch the educator, team, school or district toward improvement, but not be out of reach. The focus and effort required to achieve a rigorous but realistic goal should be challenging, but not exhausting. Goals set too high will discourage us, while goals set too low will leave us feeling "empty" when they are accomplished, and won't serve our students well.

T = Timed

A goal needs to have a deadline. Deadlines help all of us take action. For a goal to be accomplished, there need to be definite times when key actions will be completed and benchmarks achieved. Tracking the progress we're making on our action steps (process benchmarks) is essential: if we fall behind on doing something we said we were going to do, we'll need to accelerate the pace on something else. But tracking progress on process outcomes isn't enough. Our outcome benchmarks help us know whether we're on track to achieve our goal and/or whether we've reached our goal. Benchmarks give us a way to see our progress and celebrate it. They also give us information we need to make mid-course corrections.

[1] The SMART goal concept was introduced by G.T. Doran, A. Miller and J. Cunningham in *There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives*, Management Review 70 (11), AMA Forum, pp. 35-36. *What Makes a Goal "SMART"?* also draws from the work of Ed Costa, Superintendent of Schools in Lenox; John D'Auria, Teachers 21; and Mike Gilbert, Northeast Field Director for MASC

SMART GOALS

Schools must first familiarize themselves with the district improvement goal and worthy targets prior to identifying indicators for school improvement plans. One of the most effective strategies for bringing district goals to life is to insist that all schools create goals that are specifically linked to district goals. SMART goals should be challenging yet attainable, driven by data and focused on measurable student achievement.

A SMART goal clarifies what students should learn, the standard of learning expected and the measures used to determine if students have achieved the standard.

A SMART goal is:

***S**trategic and Specific* – Linked to district and building school improvement goals and focused on specific student learning.

***M**easurable* – The success toward meeting the goals can be measured in student achievement.

***A**ttainment* – Goal can be achieved in a specific amount of time, with increased teacher effectiveness.

***R**esults Oriented* – The goals are aligned with district and building school improvement goals, power standards and focus on increased student achievement in one defined area.

***T**ime Bound* – Goals have a clearly defined time-frame including a target date.

SMART GOAL EXAMPLES

Examples of SMART Goals:

- By 2018, 15% of students (4% in 2016, an additional 5% in 2017, and an additional 6% in 2018) who are not meeting/exceeding standards in Grades 3-8 will now meet or exceed performance on State testing.

- This year, at least 90 percent of our students will meet or exceed the target score of 3 on each strand of our summative writing prompt in May.

NOT a SMART Goal:

- Students will improve their reading comprehension.

- Third grade students will improve their number sense skills as measured by the third grade math common assessment.

SMART Goal Worksheet

School: Team Name: Team Leader:

Team Members:

District Goal(s):

School Goal(s):

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Who Is Responsible	Target Date or Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness

SMART Goal Worksheet: Third-Grade Team

School: George Washington Elementary **Team Name:** Third Grade **Team Leader:** Theresa Smith

Team Members: Ken Thomas, Joe Ramirez, Cathy Armstrong, Amy Wu

District Goal(s):

1. We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas using a variety of indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal(s):

1. We will improve student achievement in language arts as measured by local, district, state, and national indicators.

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Who Is Responsible	Target Date or Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
Our Current Reality: Last year, 85 percent of our students met or exceeded the target score of 3 on our state's writing prompt in May. **Our SMART Goal:** This year, at least 90 percent of our students will meet or exceed the target score of 3 on our state's writing prompt in May.	**Curriculum** 1. Clarify and pace essential student learning outcomes in writing using standards documents, curriculum guides, assessment blueprints and data, and the wish list of skills from the fourth-grade team.	All members of our team	October 15	Lists of essential student learning outcomes and pacing guide Increased results for all students on team, district, state, and national indicators

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Who Is Responsible	Target Date or Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
	Assessments 2. Develop, implement, and collaboratively score grade-level formative writing prompts to: a) Frequently monitor each student's learning of essential writing outcomes b) Provide students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate progress in meeting and exceeding learning targets in writing c) Learn with and from each other better ways to help students become proficient writers	All members of our team	October–May Checkpoints at midpoint of each grading period District benchmark assessments at end of each semester	Common writing prompts Common writing rubric Increased results for all students on team, district, state, and national indicators
	3. Provide students with writing assignments in all subject areas, and utilize a variety of instructional strategies to help students learn all essential writing skills.	All members of our team Principal Resource staff Volunteers	Daily, September–May	Intervention/enrichment schedule Student learning results
	4. Initiate individual and small-group sessions to provide additional intervention and enrichment focused on writing.	All members of our team	Daily, September–May	Intervention/enrichment schedule Student learning results
	5. Provide parents with resources and strategies to help their children succeed as writers.	All members of our team	First semester workshop: 10/20 Second semester workshop: 1/19 Newsletters End-of-grading-period conferences	Number of parents in attendance Study guides and newsletters

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Who Is Responsible	Target Date or Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
	Staff Development 6. Develop, implement, and evaluate our team action research project in writing to improve our individual and collective ability to help our students learn to write at high levels. Use information from our common formative assessments to identify staff development needs and engage in ongoing, job-embedded staff development in the area of writing.	All members of our team	Weekly collaborative team meetings Staff development days Faculty meeting sessions Additional professional learning time by request	Common assessments Quarterly reviews Midyear progress reports End-of-year team evaluations Increased results for all students on team, district, state, and national indicators

SMART Goal Worksheet: Eighth-Grade Math

School: Thomas Jefferson Middle School **Team Name:** Eighth-Grade Math **Team Leader:** Chris Rauch

Team Members: Chris Carter, Dolores Layco, Mary Fischer

District Goal:

1. We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas using a variety of indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal(s): We will:

1. Reduce the failure rate in our school.
2. Increase the percentage of students scoring at or above the established proficiency standard on the state assessment in all areas.

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Who Is Responsible	Target Date or Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
Our Current Reality: Last year, 24 percent of our students failed one or more semesters of math, and 31 percent of our students were unable to meet the state proficiency standard in math.	We will align each unit of our math program with state standards, study the results of the last state assessment, identify problem areas, and develop specific strategies to address those areas in our course.	Entire team	We will complete the analysis on the teacher workday prior to the start of the year. We will review our findings prior to the start of each new unit.	Written analysis of state assessment and strategies to address weaknesses
Our SMART Goal: This year, we will reduce the percentage of failing grades to 10 percent or less and the percentage of students unable to meet state standards to no more than 15 percent.	We will develop common formative assessments and administer them every three weeks. These assessments will provide repeated opportunities for students to become familiar with the format used on the state assessment.	Entire team	Formative assessments will be created prior to the start of each unit of instruction throughout the year. They will be administered on a day designated by the team.	Student performance on team-endorsed common assessments

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Who Is Responsible	Target Date or Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
	After each common assessment, we will identify any student who does not meet the established proficiency standard and will work with the counselor to have those students reassigned from study hall to the math tutoring center.	Members of entire team will request tutoring as their supervisory responsibility; team leader will work with the counselor after each assessment.	Assessments will be administered every three weeks. Students will be assigned to the tutoring center within one week of assessment.	Daily list of students receiving tutoring in math
	We will replace failing grades from our common assessments with the higher grade earned by students who are able to demonstrate proficiency in key skills on subsequent forms of the assessment after completing tutoring.	Entire team will create multiple forms of each assessment. Tutors will administer the assessment after a student has completed the required tutoring.	Multiple forms of an assessment will be created prior to the start of each unit of instruction. Tutors will administer the second assessment within two weeks of a student's assignment to the tutoring center.	Compilation of results from subsequent assessments
	We will examine the results of each common assessment to determine which member of the team is getting the best results on each skill, and then share ideas, methods, and materials for teaching those skills more effectively.	Each member of the team	Ongoing throughout the year each time a common assessment is administered	Analysis of findings after each common assessment is administered Decrease in the failure rate Increase in percentage of students proficient on state assessment

Team SMART Goal-Setting Plan

Team/Department: _____

What is our team's "current reality"? (Areas of strength and potential areas of focus)

Based upon our current reality, we have identified the following area of focus to improve student learning…

We have collectively created the following SMART goal(s) to address this area of focus:

To achieve this goal….

Action Steps: What steps or activities will be initiated to achieve this goal?

Designation: Who will be responsible?

Time Frame: What is a realistic timeframe for each step/activity?

Outcomes/Evidence: What outcomes on student learning do we expect? What evidence will we have to show that we are making progress.

This goal was created collectively, and we are committed to achieving this goal…. (Team Signatures)

Section 5: Common Formative Assessments

"This is a formative assessment, sir. We need your summative assessment."

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Using Assessments Thoughtfully Pages 10-14

The Bridge Between Today's Lesson and Tomorrow's

Carol Ann Tomlinson

Formative assessments can improve both teaching and learning, if you follow these ten principles.

There's talk aplenty in schools these days about formative assessment. That's encouraging, because formative assessment has great potential to improve both teaching and learning. Listening to the conversations sometimes, however, reminds me that it's easier to subscribe to a word than to live out its fundamental tenets.

I see formative assessment as an ongoing exchange between a teacher and his or her students designed to help students grow as vigorously as possible and to help teachers contribute to that growth as fully as possible. When I hear formative assessment reduced to a mechanism for raising end-of-year-test scores, it makes me fear that we might reduce teaching and learning to that same level.

Formative assessment is—or should be—the bridge or causeway between today's lesson and tomorrow's. Both its alignment with current content goals and its immediacy in providing insight about student understanding are crucial to helping teacher and student see how to make near-term adjustments so the progression of learning can proceed as it should. I worry when I hear educators say they have purchased formative assessments to give once a quarter or once a month to keep tabs on student achievement. These assessments are not likely to be well aligned with tomorrow's lesson, nor are they able to provide feedback rapidly enough to influence daily instruction.

The best teachers work persistently to benefit the learners in their charge. Because teaching is too complex to invite perfection, even the best teachers will miss the mark on some days, but in general, teachers who use sound formative assessment aspire to the following 10 principles.

1. Help students understand the role of formative assessment.

Students often feel that assessment equals test equals grade equals judgment. That association leads many discouraged students to give up rather than to risk another failure. It causes many high-achieving students to focus on grades rather than learning, and on safe answers rather than thoughtful ones.

It's important, then, for teachers to help students understand that assessments help them learn and that immediate perfection should not be their goal. Teachers can communicate this message by telling students,

When we're mastering new things, it's important to feel safe making mistakes. Mistakes are how we figure out how to get better at what we are doing. They help us understand our thinking. Therefore, many assessments in this class will not be graded. We'll analyze the assessments so we can make improvements in our work, but they won't go into the grade book. When you've had time to practice, then we'll talk about tests and grades.

It's essential for teachers to help learners both understand and experience the reality that sustained effort and mindful attention to progress feed success. That belief needs to be a cornerstone ethic in the classroom.

2. Begin with clear KUDs.

The first step in creating a worthy formative assessment occurs well before the teacher develops the assessment. It happens when the teacher begins to map out curriculum. At that point, the teacher asks the pivotal question, "What is most important for students to *Know*, *Understand*, and be able to *Do* as a result of this segment of learning?" Absent clarity on the essential knowledge, understanding, and skills for a unit or lesson, the curriculum wanders. But with clarity about KUDs, the teacher is able to focus curricular decisions squarely on what matters most for student success.

KUDs also lay the groundwork for pre-assessment and ongoing assessment. A preassessment provides a "dipstick check" of student status as a unit begins. It need not be wholly comprehensive, but rather should sample student standing in relation to the material so the teacher has a reasonable approximation of who may experience difficulty, who may show early mastery, and who may bring misunderstandings to the unit of study. Other formative assessments will follow regularly and often, and together they will form an image of a student's emergent development.

Alignment between KUDs and formative assessments—and later, between formative assessment results and instructional plans—is imperative if formative assessment is to fulfill its promise.

3. Make room for student differences.

The most useful formative assessments make it possible for students to show what they know, understand, and can do; therefore, it's useful for teachers to build some flexibility into formative assessments. For example, a student who is learning English may be able to draw and label a diagram of the relationship between density and buoyancy but not write a paragraph explaining it. The prompt, "Use an example from your experience to illustrate the idea that a person's culture shapes his or her perspective," is more likely to draw a meaningful response from a broader range of students than the prompt, "Explain the relationship between culture and perspective." Likewise, asking students to illustrate how fractions are used in sports, music, cooking, shopping, building something, or another area they are interested in is more likely to be revealing than asking them simply to explain uses of fractions.

In formative assessments (as in summative ones), it's acceptable—and often wise—to allow students some latitude in how they express what they know, understand, and can do. Assessment formats and conditions can vary as long as all forms of the assessment measure the same KUDs.

4. Provide instructive feedback.

Although formative assessments should rarely be graded, students do need useful feedback. Comments like, "Nice job," "I enjoyed this," or "Not quite" don't help learners understand what they did well or how they missed the mark. Feedback needs to help the student know what to do to improve the next time around. For example, it's helpful for a teacher to say, "The flow of your logic in this section is clear, but you need additional detail to support your thinking." It offers a student little guidance if the teacher simply says, "Not quite there yet," or "Weak effort."

When feedback serves its instructional purpose, students are clear about the learning targets at which they are aiming, and they understand that assessments show how they are doing in reaching those targets. They trust that teachers will use the assessments to help them achieve, and they know that there will soon be follow-up opportunities for them to use the feedback in improving their performance.

5. Make feedback user-friendly.

Feedback should be clear, focused, and appropriately challenging for the learner. As teachers, we sometimes feel our job is to mark every error on a paper. Not only is that practice time-consuming, robbing us of time we could more potently use for instructional planning, but a sea of "edits" without clarity about which comments matter most, how they connect, or what to do next is likely to evoke a negative response from a student.

To realize its power, feedback must result in a student thinking about how to improve—the ideal is to elicit a cognitive response from the learner, not an emotional one (Wiliam, 2011).

It's seldom useful to send students a message that their work is stellar or that their work is dreadful. Praise and shame shut down learning far more often than they catalyze it. It's more fruitful to straightforwardly share with students their particular next steps in the learning process, based on goals that are clear to teacher and student alike. The teacher sees where a student is in a learning progression and points the way ahead for that student. In other words, feedback is differentiated, pointing each learner toward actions that are challenging but achievable for that learner.

For example, a teacher who is working with students on using sources to support an opinion provides criteria for the effective use of resources for this purpose. In writing an opinion piece, some students may have difficulty synthesizing ideas from multiple resources. A second group of students may synthesize proficiently but rely solely on obvious interpretations of text. To move ahead, the first group of students needs specific guidance on how to synthesize ideas from resources. The second group needs direction in plumbing ideas more deeply. Both groups will receive feedback in the area of using resources to support an opinion, but their feedback will focus on aspects of the skill set that move them to their next step in development.

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6. Assess persistently

Formative assessment should permeate a class period. A great teacher is a habitual student of his or her students. A keen observer, the teacher is constantly watching what students do, looking for clues about their learning progress, and asking for input from students about their status.

These teachers walk among their students as they work, listening for clues about their understanding, asking questions that probe their thinking, taking notes on what they see and hear. They ask students to signal their level of confidence with the task they are doing with thumbs-up, thumbs-down, or thumbs-sideways, for example, to gain a sense of how the class as a whole is faring. They ask students to write answers to questions on whiteboards or to respond with clickers so they can get an in-process sense of how individual students are coming along.

They use start-up prompts to see what students learned from last night's homework. They use exit cards to assess student understanding as a class ends. They spot-check student work with an eye to seeing how students are progressing with a particular skill. They talk with students as they enter and leave the classroom, at lunch, or while waiting for the school buses to leave. They solicit and are alert to parent input about their students' strengths, attitudes, work habits, and goals.

It isn't really so much that these teachers use formative assessments *often*. It's that they do so *continually*—formally and informally, with individuals and with the group, to understand academic progress and to understand the human beings that they teach. For these teachers, formative assessment is not ancillary to effective teaching. It is the core of their professional work.

7. Engage students with formative assessment.

Time was when doctors examined patients, made diagnoses, and provided treatment plans with limited conversation about their observations or alternative courses of treatment. More recently, physicians have learned that outcomes improve when patients and doctors exchange information and examine treatment options together.

It's easy for teachers to stick with the traditional classroom paradigm that casts them in the role of giver and grader of tests, diagnoser of student needs, and prescriber of regimens. Things go much better, however, when students are fully engaged in the assessment process.

Students benefit from examining their own work in light of rubrics that align tightly with content goals and point toward quality of content, process, and product—or in comparison to models of high-quality work that are just a bit above the student's current level of performance. They benefit from providing feedback on peers' work, as long as the feedback is guided by clear criteria and a process that enables them to provide useful suggestions.

Students also need to be involved in thoughtfully examining teacher feedback, asking questions when the feedback is not clear, and developing plans that specify how they will use that feedback to benefit their own academic growth. Students who are consistent participants in the formative assessment process should be able to say something like this:

Here are four goals I'm working on right now. In this piece of work, here's evidence that I'm competent with the first and third goals. If we look at my work from a month ago and then at this most recent piece, I can show you evidence of my progress with the second goal. I can also tell you two things I'm going to work on this week to make sure I become more confident and more skilled in working with the fourth goal.

8. Look for patterns.

The goal of reviewing formative assessment is not to be able to say, "Six students made *A*s, seven made *B*s, ten made *C*s, and so on." Neither is the goal to create 32 lesson plans for 32 students. Rather, it is to find patterns in the students' work that point the way to planning

classroom instruction that both moves students along a learning continuum and is manageable.

Patterns will vary widely with the focus of the assessment. In one instance, a teacher may see some students who have already mastered the content, others who are fine with computations but not word problems, still others who know how to tackle the word problems but are making careless errors, and another group that is struggling with prerequisite knowledge or skills.

In another instance, a teacher may find that one group of students can provide causes of an event but no evidence for their reasoning, while other students are able to provide both causes and evidence. In still another case, a teacher may see students who understand the general idea being assessed but lack academic vocabulary to write with precision, while other students are using appropriate academic vocabulary. The possibilities are many, but the goal is to look for clusters of student need and plan ways to help each group of students move ahead.

9. Plan instruction around content requirements and student needs.

There is little point in spending time on formative assessment unless it leads to modification of teaching and learning plans. In other words, formative assessment is a means to design instruction that's a better fit for student needs, not an end in itself.

On rare occasions, formative assessment will indicate that everyone in the class needs more practice with a certain skill or more engagement with a particular understanding. Much more frequently, however, formative assessment points to a need for differentiated instruction during at least some of an upcoming class period, in homework, or in both. John Hattie (2012) says that teachers must know where students are and aim to move them "+1" beyond that point; thus the idea of teaching the class as a whole is unlikely to pitch the lesson correctly for all students. This is where the skill of teachers in knowing the similarities across students and allowing for the differences becomes so important. (p. 97)

An assessment is really only a formative assessment when teachers glean evidence about student performance, interpret that evidence, and use it to provide teaching that is more likely to benefit student learning than the instruction those teachers would have delivered if they had continued forward without using what they learned through the assessment (Wiliam, 2011).

10. Repeat the process.

Formative assessment is more habitual than occasional in classrooms where maximizing each student's growth is a central goal. In such classes, it simply makes no sense to teach without a clear understanding of each student's development along a learning trajectory. It is wasteful of time, resources, and learner potential not to make instructional plans based on that understanding. Assessment of each learning experience informs plans for the next learning experience. Such an assessment process never ends.

A classroom is a system with interdependent parts—each affecting the other for better or worse. The learning environment, quality of curriculum, use of formative assessment, instructional planning, and implementation of classroom routines work together to enhance student learning—or, if any of the elements does not function effectively, to impede it. Fruitful use of formative assessment is an essential component in the mix.

References

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. New York: Routledge.

Wiliam, D., (2011). *Embedded formative assessment*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

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Student opportunity to learn: Do all students of the course or grade level have access to the same content? By the end of the unit will every teacher have covered the same content at the same level of rigor?

Depth of knowledge: Are cognitive requirements between the formative assessment tasks and the learning targets in the unit consistent for each teacher on the team? Is the same complexity of student knowledge (and skill) sought and required by all teachers for the mathematics unit through the tasks that students experience?

Range of knowledge: Is the range of content covered under each of the content standard clusters for the unit of knowledge similar from teacher to teacher in the grade level or course? Do all teachers of the course or grade level include daily common mathematical tasks that prepare students for procedural fluency as well as the conceptual understanding tasks that will be part of the common assessment instruments that all teachers use during the unit or chapter?

Balance of representation: Are learning targets for a particular cluster of standards given the same emphasis on the common assessment instruments all teachers on the collaborative team use?

Source of challenge: Does student assessment (test) performance actually depend on mastering the learning targets and not on irrelevant knowledge or skills?

Source: Adapted from Wise & Alt, 2005, p. 4.

Figure 4.4:
Evaluation Tool for Assessment Instrument Quality

Assessment indicators	Description of Level 1	Requirements of the Indicator Are Not Present	Limited Requirements of This Indicator Are Present	Substantially Meets the Requirements of the Indicator	Fully Achieves the Requirements of the Indicator	Description of Level 4
Identification and emphasis on learning targets	Learning targets are unclear or absent from the assessment instrument. Too much attention is given to one target.	1	2	3	4	Clearly stated learning targets are on the assessment and connected to the assessment questions.
Visual presentation	Assessment is sloppy, disorganized, and difficult to read. There is no room for teacher feedback.	1	2	3	4	Assessment is neat, organized, easy to read, and well spaced. There is room for teacher feedback.
Time allotment	Few students can complete the assessment in the time allowed.	1	2	3	4	Test can be successfully completed in time allowed.
Clarity of directions	Directions are missing or unclear.	1	2	3	4	Directions are appropriate and clear.
Clear and appropriate scoring rubrics	Scoring rubric is either not in evidence or not appropriate for the assessment task.	1	2	3	4	Scoring rubric is clearly stated and appropriate for each problem.
Variety of assessment task formats	Assessment contains only one type of questioning strategy and no multiple choice. Calculator usage is not clear.	1	2	3	4	Test includes a variety of question types, assesses different formats, and includes calculator usage.
Question phrasing (precision)	Wording is vague or misleading. Vocabulary and precision of language is problematic for student understanding.	1	2	3	4	Vocabulary is direct, fair, and clearly understood. Students are expected to attend to precision in responses.
Balance of procedural fluency and demonstration of understanding	Test is not balanced for rigor. Emphasis is on procedural knowledge. Minimal cognitive demand for demonstration of understanding is present.	1	2	3	4	Test is balanced with product- and process-level questions. Higher-cognitive-demand and understanding tasks are present.

Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels

Level One Activities	Level Two Activities	Level Three Activities	Level Four Activities
▪ Recall elements and details of story structure, such as sequence of events, character, plot, and setting. ▪ Conduct basic mathematical calculations. ▪ Label locations on a map. ▪ Represent in words or diagrams a scientific concept or relationship. ▪ Perform routine procedures like measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly. ▪ Describe the features of a place or people.	▪ Identify and summarize the major events in a narrative. ▪ Use context cues to identify the meaning of unfamiliar words. ▪ Solve routine multiple-step problems. ▪ Describe the cause and effect of a particular event. ▪ Identify patterns in events or behavior. ▪ Formulate a routine problem given data and conditions. ▪ Organize, represent, and interpret data.	▪ Support ideas with details and examples. ▪ Use voice appropriate to the purpose and audience. ▪ Identify research questions and design investigations for a scientific problem. ▪ Develop a scientific model for a complex situation. ▪ Determine the author's purpose and describe how it affects the interpretation of a reading selection. ▪ Apply a concept in other contexts.	▪ Conduct a project that requires specifying a problem, designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data, and reporting results and solutions. ▪ Apply mathematical model to illuminate a problem or situation. ▪ Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources. ▪ Describe and illustrate how common themes are found across texts from different cultures. ▪ Design a mathematical model to inform and solve a practical or abstract situation.

Source: Webb, N. L. (2005). *Web alignment tool.* Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center of Educational Research. University of Wisconsin-Madison. Retrieved from http://wat.wceruw.org/index.aspx

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Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Question Stems

DOK 1

- Can you recall ____?
- When did ____ happen?
- Who was ____?
- How can you recognize ____?
- What is ____?
- How can you find the meaning of ____?
- Can you recall ____?
- Can you select ____?
- How would you write ____?
- What might you include on a list about ____?
- Who discovered ____?
- What is the formula for ____?
- Can you identify ____?
- How would you describe ____?

DOK 2

- Can you explain how ____ affected ____?
- How would you apply what you learned to develop ____?
- How would you compare ____? Contrast?
- How would you classify ____?
- How are ____ alike? Different?
- How would you classify the type of ____?
- What can you say about ____?
- How would you summarize ____?
- How would you summarize ____?
- What steps are needed to edit ____?
- When would you use an outline to ____?
- How would you estimate ____?
- How could you organize ____?
- What would you use to classify ____?
- What do you notice about ____?

DOK 3

- How is ____ related to ____?
- What conclusions can you draw?
- How would you adapt ____ to create a different ___?
- How would you test ____?
- Can you predict the outcome if?
- What is the best answer? Why?
- What conclusion can be drawn from these three texts?
- What is your interpretation of this text? Support your rationale.
- How would you describe the sequence of ____?
- What facts would you select to support ____?
- Can you elaborate on the reason ____?
- What would happen if ____?
- Can you formulate a theory for ____?
- How would you test ____?
- Can you elaborate on the reason ____?

DOK 4

- Write a thesis, drawing conclusions from multiple sources.
- Design and conduct an experiment. Gather information to develop alternative explanations for the results of an experiment.
- Write a research paper on a topic.
- Apply information from one text to another text to develop a persuasive argument.
- What information can you gather to support your idea about ____?
- DOK 4 would most likely be the writing of a research paper or applying information from one text to another text to develop a persuasive argument.
- DOK 4 requires time for extended thinking.

From *Depth of Knowledge—Descriptors, Examples and Question Stems for Increasing Depth of Knowledge in the Classroom*, developed by Dr. Norman Webb, and flip chart developed by Myra Collins

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Assessment Plan

Use one form for each assessment planned during the unit.

Assessment:

	Knowledge	Application	Analysis	Evaluation	Total Items/ Total Time
Target 1					
Target 2					
Target 3					

Key: SR = selected response; CWS = constructed or written response; P = performance assessment; Light grey = selected response may be appropriate; dark grey = selected response may not be appropriate

Timeline for Assessment	
Follow-Up Data Meeting Date	

Balanced Assessment System Framework

	Classroom Assessments		Common Formative Assessments	Benchmark Assessments	External Summative Assessments
Examples of practice	Worksheets, clickers, whiteboards, exit slips, conferences	Final exams, final projects	Tasks assessed with rubrics, short quizzes, common worksheets, and clickers	Quarterly tests or performances, writing samples	State tests and ACT, SAT, and AP exams
Formative or summative?	Very formative	More summative	Very formative	More summative	Summative
Whose responsibility?	Classroom teachers	Classroom teachers	Collaborative teams at each school	District teams of representative teachers	An external group of experts
Purpose?	To give immediate feedback	To give a grade	To determine if students have learned the material and how to respond	To assess curriculum, instructional strategies, and pacing	To determine whether curriculum, instructional strategies, and pacing were appropriate

Sample Protocol for Developing an Assessment

Facilitator Notes

Remind team members that the purpose of each common formative assessment is to provide data back to the team about which students have or have not mastered each of the learning targets being assessed. The assessment needs to be short and easy enough to score so that the team can respond quickly to the results.

The team will respond to students who need additional time and support around a specific learning target, those who might benefit from additional practice, as well as those who would benefit with opportunities for enrichment and extension.

Materials Needed

- The unwrapped organizer for the standard(s)
- Template for assessment plan

The Design Process

Step One: Decide What to Assess

Consider all of the learning targets you have found during the unwrapping process that are being taught during this part of the unit. Decide which of these targets to assess. Remember you do not have to assess every learning target.

Consider:

1. Which targets are most likely to cause certain students difficulty?
2. Which targets are most important or prerequisite skills for information to come later in this unit?
3. Which targets are absolutely necessary for students to know?

Step Two: Decide How to Assess

For each learning target, make sure team members agree on the expected level of thinking for mastery of that target. For each learning target, choose the most appropriate assessment method: selected response, constructed response, or performance assessment. Make sure that the thinking level you're expecting can be assessed with the type of assessment you've chosen.

Step Three: Develop the Assessment Plan

Complete the assessment plan. Decide what type of items and how many items you will use to assess student learning on each target. Consider how long the assessment will take to administer and how much time teachers will need to score the results.

Step Four: Determine the Timeline

Decide the date or range of dates for administering the assessment and the date for the next meeting to discuss results. Remember to consider scoring time before establishing the date for the meeting to discuss the data.

Step Five: Write the Assessment

Use the guidelines for quality item writing while writing the assessment.

Step Six: Review the Assessment Before Administration

Review the assessment to make sure the directions are clear and that students will understand what you are expecting from them during the assessment.

Step Seven: Set Proficiency Criteria and Decide How to Gather the Data

Determine what the score for proficiency will be so that data can be reported back by learning target and by student.

Planning Common Formative Assessments

Learning Target	**Bloom:** Remember/ Understand **Marzano:** Retrieval **DOK: Recall**	**Bloom:** Apply **Marzano:** Comprehension **DOK: Skills and Concepts**	**Bloom:** Analyze **Marzano:** Analysis **DOK: Strategic Thinking**	**Bloom:** Evaluate/Create **Marzano:** Knowledge Utilization **DOK: Extended Thinking**	**Total Number of Questions**

Common Assessment Team Protocol

This protocol is designed to help a teacher team quickly and efficiently discuss a common assessment. If each teacher reviews his or her own assessment data prior to the team meeting, then the team should be able to collectively complete this activity within a typical team meeting.

1. Which specific students did not demonstrate mastery on which specific standards? (Respond by the student, by the standard)

2. Which instructional practices proved to be most effective?

3. What patterns can we identify from the student mistakes?

4. How can we improve this assessment?

5. What interventions are needed to provide failed students additional time and support?

6. How will we extend learning for students who have mastered the standard(s)?

There are three Essential Questions our teams need to ask ourselves when creating our Common Assessments:

1) Have we created common assessments that measure student mastery of each essential standard?
2) Do we compare results to identify the most effective teaching strategies for our students?
3) Do we use this information to guide our interventions?

Section 6: Data Analysis & Planning

"There's nothing wrong with this data that a little Wite-Out wouldn't cure."

Data Analysis Steps

Goal:

To use the data to determine:

- Best Practices
- Gaps in Practice
- Next steps in response to question three, "What do we do when learning has not occurred?"

- Next steps in response to question four, "What do we do when learning has already occurred?" **Objective:**

Working as a collaborative team, review the background information, instructional practices, and data generated from a common formative assessment given by the team. Compare data to the proficient score and SMART Goal established by the team when establishing essential standard(s) and creating common formative assessment.

Data Analysis Steps:

1. Collect Instructional practices used—suggest sending to a designated manager prior to meeting
2. Collect and organize data—suggest sending data to a designated data manager prior to meeting
3. Break down the data for subgroups
4. Examine the data for patterns, including patterns in the student work
5. Different qualitative, non-statistical, and statistical methods can be used as needed to look deeper into data trends
6. Summarized the findings, revisit data to verify the themes and patterns you have identified

Questions and Tasks to Complete:

- How was the performance of the overall team as compared with its SMART goal?
- What was the overall performance of the subgroups of the entire grade level as compared to individual teacher results?
- What connections can you make between student performance on the Common Formative Assessment and instructional strategies?
- What does the subgroup data tell you about the effectiveness of instructional strategies?
- What does the data suggest for next steps for this team?
- How would you coach this team as an administrator interested in improving student learning?
- What recommendations would you make prior to taking on the next essential standard?

Data Analysis Practice Scenario

Objective:

As a PLC, you will:

Review the information listed below.
Consider the instructional practices used in the various classes.
Analyze the Data from the various teachers from the Common Formative Assessment.
Then answer the 7 questions at the end of the scenario and determine:
- Most effective instructional practices
- Gaps in practice
- And Next steps (questions 3 & 4)
- What other information might you need to plan the reengagement piece?

Essential Standard identified:

RL.2.3 Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Teachers in Scenario:

Mr. Salmon – 5th year teacher, ESL endorsed, Reading specialist credentials, strong leadership skills.

Mr. Ahi – Veteran teacher of 26 years, 1st year at the 2nd grade level, confident in his instructional skills.

Mrs. Punlish – Veteran teacher of 14 years, has always taught 2nd grade, prefers not to share students with other teachers, history of being highly effective but keeps to herself.

Ms. Bass – Currently the Special education resource teacher, 14 year veteran with experience teaching language arts at the middle school level for many years before coming into special education. Very friendly with all staff, highly revered for her ability, prefers to push in model for students she services.

Common Formative Assessment Used (CFA):

The CFA will be a writing entry using the essential standard as the prompt. Writing entry will be assessed with common reading response rubric. *Scoring with the Rubric was Normed within the PLC as part of the process.*

Proficiency Score Determined:

The PLC has decided that on this common assessment, a score of 9 out of 12 would demonstrate proficient mastery of this standard.

Team SMART Goal:

PLC members set the following SMART goal: After 9 days of instruction, no less than 80% of all students will have reached the proficiency score agreed upon on the CFA. After re-teaching and reassessing non proficient students, no less than 98% of all students will meet proficiency levels.

Instructional Strategies Used

Teacher	Strategies	Materials	CFU	Reteach
Salmon	One Day of instruction with daily follow up during mini lesson. White boards with pair-share Focused on major events and challenges questions.	Used supplemental materials from the textbook. Used a mastery level writing response to highlight.	Whiteboard review Randomly selected student to answer questions in class during instruction	Retaught whole group if more than 50% missed mini lesson Corrected students on an individual basis when they did not understand the concept.
Ahi	Taught the standard in 2 days. Focused on worksheets and questions from the textbook.	Used textbook and text questions exclusively	Corrected questions with whole class Quizzes every other day Students asked questions throughout lesson.	Reinforced lesson when an opportunity arose.
Punlish	Taught daily through mini lessons Used graphic organizers with the whole group. Led students in small groups focusing on major events and challenges discussion topics	Used grade level anthology Teacher created graphic organizer	Project completion of student writing Reviewed whole class and in small groups	Smalls groups pulled to meet with teacher to reteach concept when there was confusion

Bass (Sped)	Focused on key vocabulary with students on her caseload. Worked with Graphic organizers in classes where they were used. Worked in classrooms when teacher requested.	Used the materials that were provided by teacher.	Focus on correct completion of graphic organizers and proper focus on major events and challenges	Reviewed with small group daily when students still needed assistance.

Student Scores by teacher

(all classes are heterogeneous based upon previous year's MAP data)

Salmon		**Ahi**		**Punlish**	
Trout**	11**	Barge	9	Baltic	11
Talapia	3	Canoe	4	Aegean*	9*
Catfish	8	Gondo-la**	2**	Adriatic	11
Panfish**	9**	Kayak	5	Catalan	12
Bluegill**	12**	Pontoon	6	Labrador	12
Coy**	12**	Raft	7	Marmara	12
Gourami	11	Schooner**	3**	Chesapeake	11
Pike*	2*	Yacht	9	Celtic**	3**
Perch	7	Yawl*	6*	Caribbean**	4**
Sturgeon	6	Zille	12	Ionion	12

*Special Education Resource Students

**ESL Student

Curriculum:
All teachers are using the same anthology for whole class instruction and follow the district pacing guide.

PLC Norms:
Please use your teams agreed upon norms to proceed in this exercise.

Questions to address:
See attached list of guiding questions to answer, plus the following question:
What other information might you need to plan the reengagement piece?

Record your team's responses to each question.

1. How was the performance of the overall team as compared with its SMART Goal?

2. What was the overall performance of the subgroups of the entire grade level as compared to individual teacher results?

3. What connections can you make between student performance on the common formative assessment and instructional strategies?

4. What do the subgroup data tell you about the effectiveness of instructional strategies?

5. What do the data suggest about next steps for this team as it works to answer questions three and four?

6. How would you coach this team as an administrator interested in improving student learning?

7. What recommendations would you make to this team prior to taking on the next essential standard?

Instructional Practices Used:

Teachers	Strategies	Materials	CFU	Reteach

Section 7: PLC Forms

"Well, it's continuous improvement, isn't it?"

Meeting Agenda / Action Record

NORMS OF COLLABORATION: Pausing , Paraphrasing, Posing Questions, Putting Ideas on the Table, Providing Data, Paying attention to Self and Others, Presuming Positive Intentions TEAM NORMS:

TEAM NAME: **DATE:**

Roles:

- **Facilitator:**
- **Time Keeper:**
- **Recorder:**
- **Data Processor:**

Acceptable PLC actions:

Data Analysis and Planning

Align Essential learning with standards

Identify prerequisite knowledge and skills to master a standard

Agree on best sequence for unit content

Identify Strategies for learning

Develop systems to re-teach/re-engage

Develop common formative or summative assessments

Norm scoring criteria for student work

Build on instructor or curriculum strengths/weaknesses

Identify students and plan for interventions

Purpose / Goal(s) for this meeting:

Meeting Topics:	**Desired Outcomes:**
	1.

MEETING MINUTES

Team Members 1.	**Team Members Absent**
	1.

Discussion / Decision Summary:

Action Steps:	Person Responsible:

Agenda Items for next meeting:	Artifacts attached from this meeting:

Date of next meeting:

Date Action Record distributed by:

READING Building Worthy Target:
2016-2017 Grade Level / Content Area PLC SMART Goal:
UNIT SMART Goal:
What do we want the students to learn? Content: Unit: CCSS:

How will we know they've learned it?			
What CFA will be used?	What instructional strategies will be used?	When will CFA be given?	When will data be normed, scored and analyzed?
Mid-Unit CFA Analysis			
Percentage of students who met the SMART goal target at mid-unit:			_____%
Adjusted UNIT SMART Goal (based on mid-unit assessment):			

How will we respond when learning HAS NOT occurred?		How will we respond when learning HAS occurred?
What reteaching strategies will be utilized? (small group, deploy,..)		What extension strategies will be utilized?
How will we know if re-teaching was successful?		How will we know studens can apply concept to everyday situations?
CFA **Percentage of students who met the SMART goal target after re-teaching :**	_____%	

End of Unit Summative Assessment Results	
Percentage of students who met the Unit SMART goal target:	_____%

Team Members Present		Date(s)	

MATH Building Worthy Target:			
2016-2017 Grade Level / Content Area PLC SMART Goal:			
UNIT SMART Goal:			
What do we want the students to learn? Content: Unit: CCSS:			
How will we know they've learned it?			
What CFA will be used?	What instructional strategies will be used?	When will CFA be given?	When will data be normed, scored and analyzed?
Mid-Unit CFA Analysis			
Percentage of students who met the SMART goal target at mid-unit:			_____%
Adjusted UNIT SMART Goal (based on mid-unit assessment):			

How will we respond when learning HAS NOT occurred?		How will we respond when learning HAS occurred?
What reteaching strategies will be utilized? (small group, deploy,..)		What extension strategies will be utilized?
How will we know if re-teaching was successful?		How will we know studens can apply concept to everyday situations?
CFA **Percentage of students who met the SMART goal target after re-teaching :**	_____%	

End of Unit Summative Assessment Results	
Percentage of students who met the Unit SMART goal target:	_____%

Team Members Present:		**Date(s):**	

Section 8: Additional PLC Resources

"We are assuming collective responsibility for your learning, Kenny, not ganging up on you."

Glossary of Key Terms and Concepts

The following glossary provides a brief definition of key terms and concepts as they are used in the context of this book and in the context of professional learning communities in general.

action orientation. A predisposition to learn by doing; moving quickly to turn aspirations into actions and visions into realities. Members of PLCs understand that the most powerful learning always occurs in a context of taking action, and they value engagement and reflective experience as the most effective teachers.

action research. A process of collective inquiry in which individuals work together to become more proficient at identifying and solving problems. The steps of action research include: (1) formulating a problem, (2) identifying and implementing a strategy to address the problem, (3) creating a process for gathering evidence of the effectiveness of the strategy, (4) collecting and analyzing the evidence, and (4) making decisions based on the evidence.

adaptive challenges. Challenges for which the solution is not apparent; challenges that cause us to experiment, discover, adjust, and adapt (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Adaptive challenges may also be described as second-order change.

attainable goals. Goals perceived as achievable by those who set them. Attainable goals are intended to document incremental progress and build momentum and self-efficacy through short-term wins.

balanced assessment. An assessment strategy that recognizes no single assessment yields the comprehensive results necessary to inform and improve practice and foster school and system accountability. Balanced assessments utilize multiple measures of student achievement, including formative assessments *for* learning and summative assessments *of* learning. Balanced assessment also refers to using different types of assessments based upon the knowledge and/or skills students are called upon to demonstrate. Rather than relying exclusively on one kind of assessment, schools and teams develop multiple ways for students to demonstrate proficiency.

building shared knowledge. Learning together. Members of professional learning communities *always* attempt to answer critical questions by first learning together. They engage in collective inquiry to build shared knowledge. This collective study of the same information increases the likelihood that members will arrive at the same conclusion. Members of a PLC, by definition, will *learn* together.

capacity building. "Developing the collective ability—dispositions, skills, knowledge, motivation, and resources—to act together to bring about positive change" (Fullan, 2005, p. 4).

collaboration. A *systematic* process in which people work together, *interdependently,* to analyze and *impact* professional practice in order to improve individual and collective results. In a PLC, collaboration focuses on the critical questions of learning: What is it we want each student to learn? How will we know when each student has learned it? How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning? How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?

collective commitments. The third pillar of the PLC foundation. Collective commitments (or values) represent the promises made among and between all stakeholders that answer the question, What must we do to become the organization we have agreed we hope to become?

collective inquiry. The process of building shared knowledge by clarifying the questions that a group will explore together. In PLCs, educators engage in collective inquiry into more effective practices by examining both external evidence (such as research) and internal evidence (which teachers are getting the best results). They also build shared knowledge regarding the reality of the current practices and conditions in their schools or districts.

common assessment. An assessment of student learning that uses the same instrument or a common process utilizing the same criteria for determining the quality of student work. State and provincial assessments and district benchmark assessments are "common" assessments. However, in a PLC, common assessments are also created by a team of teachers with collective responsibility for the learning of a group of students who are expected to acquire the same knowledge and skills. Team-developed common assessments provide members with the basis of comparison that turns data into information and help individuals identify strengths and weaknesses in their instructional strategies. They also help identify problem areas in the curriculum that require attention.

common formative assessment. An assessment typically created collaboratively by a team of teachers responsible for the same grade level or course. Common formative assessments are used frequently throughout the year to identify (1) individual students who need additional time and support for learning, (2) the teaching strategies most effective in helping students acquire the intended knowledge and skills, (3) curriculum concerns—areas in which students generally are having difficulty achieving the intended standard—and (4) improvement goals for individual teachers and the team.

community. A group linked by common interests. Whereas the term *organization* tends to emphasize structure and efficiency, *community* suggests shared purpose, mutual cooperation, and supportive relationships.

consensus. Consensus is achieved when (1) all points of view have not only been heard but also solicited, and (2) the will of the group is evident even to those who most oppose it.

continuous improvement process. The ongoing cycle of planning, doing, checking, and acting designed to improve results—constantly. In a PLC, this cycle includes gathering evidence of current levels of student learning, developing strategies and ideas to build on strengths and address weaknesses in that learning, implementing those strategies and ideas, analyzing the impact of the changes to discover what was effective and what was not, and applying the new knowledge in the next cycle of continuous improvement.

criterion-referenced assessment. An assessment used to determine if a student or group of students have met a specific standard or intended learning outcome (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006).

critical questions of collaborative teams. In a PLC, collaboration focuses on four critical questions of learning: (1) What is it we want each student to learn, (2) How will we know when each student has learned, (3) How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning, and (4) How will we enrich and extend the learning for students who are proficient?

crucial conversation. Dialogue in which "the stakes are high, opinions vary, and emotions run strong" (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2002, p. 3). **curriculum leverage.** The skills, knowledge, and dispositions that will assist the student in becoming proficient in other areas of the curriculum and other academic disciplines (Reeves, 2002).

data versus information. Data represent facts or figures that, standing alone, will not inform practice or lead to informed decisions. To transform data into information requires putting data in context, and this typically requires a basis of comparison.

DRIP syndrome (data rich/information poor). The problem of an abundance of data that do nothing to inform practice because they are not presented in context through the use of relevant comparisons (Waterman, 1987).

endurance. The quality that defines knowledge, skills, and dispositions students are expected to retain over time as opposed to those they merely learn for a test (Reeves, 2002).

essential learning: The critical skills, knowledge, and dispositions each student must acquire as a result of each course, grade level, and unit of instruction. Essential learning may also be referred to as essential outcomes, power standards (Reeves, 2002), guaranteed and viable curriculum (Marzano, 2003), essential academic goals (Lezotte, 1991), learning intentions and success criteria (Hattie, 2009), or learning expectations and tangible exemplars of student proficiency (Saphier, 2005).

first-order change. Innovation that is incremental, representing the next step on an established path and operating within existing paradigms. The change can be implemented by using the existing knowledge and skills of the staff. The goal of first-order change is to get better at what is already being done (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

formative assessment. An assessment *for* learning used to advance and not merely monitor each student's learning; the assessment informs the teacher regarding the effectiveness of instruction and the individual student regarding progress in becoming proficient. The checks for understanding that individual teachers use in the classroom on a daily basis are examples of formative assessments. In a PLC, collaborative teams also use common formative assessments to (1) identify students who are experiencing difficulty in their learning, (2) provide those student with additional time and support in a way that does not remove them from new direct instruction, and (3) give them additional opportunities to demonstrate their learning.

foundation of a professional learning community. PLCs rest upon a shared *mission* of high levels of learning for all students. In order to achieve that mission, educators create a common *vision* of the school they must create, develop *collective commitments* or *values* regarding what they will do to create such a school, and use *goals* as measurable milestones to monitor their progress.

Genius of And. The ability to embrace paradox. Embracing the Genius of And allows an individual to avoid the choice between A *or* B and to choose both A *and* B at the same time (Collins & Porras, 1997). A commitment to simultaneous loose *and* tight leadership serves as an example of the Genius of And. See also **Tyranny of Or.**

goals. Measurable milestones that can be used to assess progress in advancing toward a vision. Goals establish targets and timelines to answer the question, What results do we seek, and how will we know we are making progress?

guaranteed and viable curriculum. A curriculum that (1) gives students access to the same essential learning regardless of who is teaching the class *and* (2) can be taught in the time allotted (Marzano, 2003).

guiding coalition. An alliance of key members of an organization who are specifically charged to lead a change process through the predictable turmoil. Members of the coalition should have shared objectives and high levels of trust.

high expectations. Positive inferences teachers make about the future academic achievement of their students based on what they know about their students (Good & Brophy, 2002). "High expectations for success will be judged, not only by the initial staff beliefs and behaviors, but also by the organization's response when some students do not learn" (Lezotte, 1991, p. 4).

knowing-doing gap. The disconnect between knowledge and action; the mystery of why knowledge of what needs to be done so frequently fails to result in action or behavior consistent with that knowledge (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000).

Law of the Few. The ability of a small close-knit group of people to champion an idea or proposal until it reaches a tipping point and spreads like an epidemic throughout an organization (Gladwell, 2002).

learning. The acquisition of new knowledge or skills through ongoing action and perpetual curiosity. Members of a PLC engage in the ongoing study and constant reflective practice that characterize an organization committed to continuous improvement.

learning organization. "Organizations where people continually expand their capacities to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (Senge, 1990, p. 3).

mission. The fundamental purpose of an organization. Mission answers the question, Why do we exist?

moral purpose. "Acting with the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of employees, customers, and society as a whole" (Fullan, 2001, p. 3). Fullan lists a commitment to moral purpose as a critical element of effective leadership and contends leadership must be ultimately assessed by the extent to which it awakens and mobilizes the moral purpose of those within the organization.

norm-referenced assessment. An assessment designed to compare the performance of an individual or group with a larger "norm" group typically representing a national sample with a wide and diverse cross-section of students (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006).

performance-based assessment. An assessment that requires students to demonstrate learning through demonstration or completion of a task (for example, essays, oral presentations, open-ended problems, labs, or real-world simulations). Prior to administering a common performance-based assessment, a collaborative team in a PLC must (1) agree on the criteria by which members will judge the quality of student work and (2) demonstrate that they apply those criteria consistently—establish interrater reliability.

power standard. The knowledge, skills, and dispositions that have *endurance* and *leverage*, and are essential in preparing students for *readiness* at the next level (Reeves, 2002); the most essential learning or outcomes.

prerequisite knowledge. See **readiness for the next level of learning.**

professional. Someone with expertise in a specialized field; an individual who has not only pursued advanced training to enter the field, but who is also expected to remain current in its evolving knowledge base.

professional development. A lifelong, collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centered, focused approach (National Staff Development Council, 2000).

professional learning community (PLC). An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles 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.

pyramid of interventions. A systematic schoolwide plan that ensures every student in every course or grade level will receive additional time and support for learning as soon as he or she experiences difficulty in acquiring essential knowledge and skills. The multitiered intervention occurs during the school day, and students are required rather than invited to devote the extra time and secure the extra support for learning.

readiness for the next level of learning. The quality of having acquired the skills, knowledge, and dispositions essential for success in the next unit, course, or grade level (Reeves, 2002).

reciprocal accountability. The premise that leaders who call upon members of the organization to engage in new work, achieve new standards, and accomplish new goals have a responsibility to those members to develop their capacity to be successful in meeting these challenges: "For every increment of performance we ask of educators, there is an equal responsibility to provide them with the capacity to meet that expectation" (Elmore, 2004, p. 93). For example, principals of professional learning communities recognize they have an obligation to provide staff with the resources, training, mentoring, and support to help them successfully accomplish what they have been asked to do.

results orientation. A focus on outcomes rather than inputs or intentions. In PLCs, members are committed to achieving desired results and are hungry for evidence that their efforts are producing the intended outcomes.

school culture. The assumptions, beliefs, values, and habits that constitute the norm for the school and guide the work of the educators within it.

school structure. The policies, procedures, rules, and hierarchical relationships within the school.

second-order change. Innovation that represents a dramatic departure from the expected and familiar. Second-order change is perceived as a break from the past, is inconsistent with existing paradigms, may seem to be at conflict with prevailing practices and norms, and will require the acquisition of new knowledge and new skills (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). See also **adaptive challenges**.

simultaneous loose and tight leadership. A leadership concept in which leaders encourage autonomy and creativity (loose) within well-defined parameters and priorities that must be honored (tight). The concept has also been referred to as "directed empowerment" (Waterman, 1987), a "culture of discipline with an ethic of entrepreneurship" (Collins, 2001, p. 124), and "defined autonomy" (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

SMART goals. Goals that are Strategic & Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-oriented, and Timebound (O'Neill & Conzemius, 2005).

stretch goals. Goals intended to inspire, to capture the imagination of people within the organization, to stimulate creativity and innovation, and to serve as a unifying focal point of effort. Stretch goals are so ambitious that they typically cannot be achieved without significant changes in practice. Stretch goals are also referred to as BHAGs: "Big Hairy Audacious Goals" (Collins & Porras, 1997, p. 9).

summative assessment. An assessment *of* learning (Stiggins, 2002) designed to provide a final measure to determine if learning goals have been met (Ainsworth & Viegut, 2006). Summative assessments yield a dichotomy: pass or fail, proficient or not proficient. Additional timely support is typically not forthcoming.

systematic intervention. A schoolwide plan that ensures every student in every course or grade level will receive additional time and support for learning as soon as he or she experiences difficulty in acquiring essential knowledge and skills. The multitiered intervention occurs during the school day, and students are required rather than invited to devote the extra time and secure the extra support for learning. Systematic intervention means that what happens when a student does not learn is no longer left to the individual teacher to determine but is addressed according to a systematic plan. See also **pyramid of interventions**.

systematic process. A specific effort to organize the combination of related parts into a coherent whole in a methodical, deliberate, and orderly way toward a particular aim. In a PLC, a systematic process reflects an aspect of the "tight" culture.

teachable point of view. A succinct explanation of an organization's purpose and direction that can be illustrated through stories that engage others emotionally and intellectually (Tichy, 1997).

team. A group of people working *interdependently* to achieve a *common goal* for which members are held *mutually accountable*. Collaborative teams are the fundamental building blocks of PLCs.

team learning process. The cyclical process in which all teams in a PLC engage to stay focused on learning. The team learning process includes: clarifying essential student learnings (skills, concepts, and dispositions) for each course and content area; agreeing on common pacing of instruction; developing multiple common formative assessments aligned to each essential outcome; establishing specific, rigorous target scores or benchmarks that will lead to success on high-stakes assessments; analyzing common assessment results; and identifying and implementing improvement strategies. Teams address each step in the process by first building shared knowledge rather than pooling opinions.

team norms. In PLCs, norms represent collective commitments developed by each team to guide members in working together. Norms help team members clarify expectations regarding how they will work together to achieve their shared goals.

time management. The ability to organize and execute one's time around priorities (Covey, 1989).

Tyranny of Or. "The rational view that cannot easily accept paradox, that cannot live with two seemingly contradictory forces at the same time. We must be A or B but not both" (Collins & Porras, 1997, p. 44). Ineffective organizations fall victim to the Tyranny of Or. See also **Genius of And**.

values. The specific attitudes, behaviors, and collective commitments that must be demonstrated in order to advance the organization's vision. Articulated values answer the question, How must we behave in order to make our shared vision a reality? See also **collective commitments**.

vision. A realistic, credible, attractive future for an organization. Vision answers the question, What do we hope to become at some point in the future?

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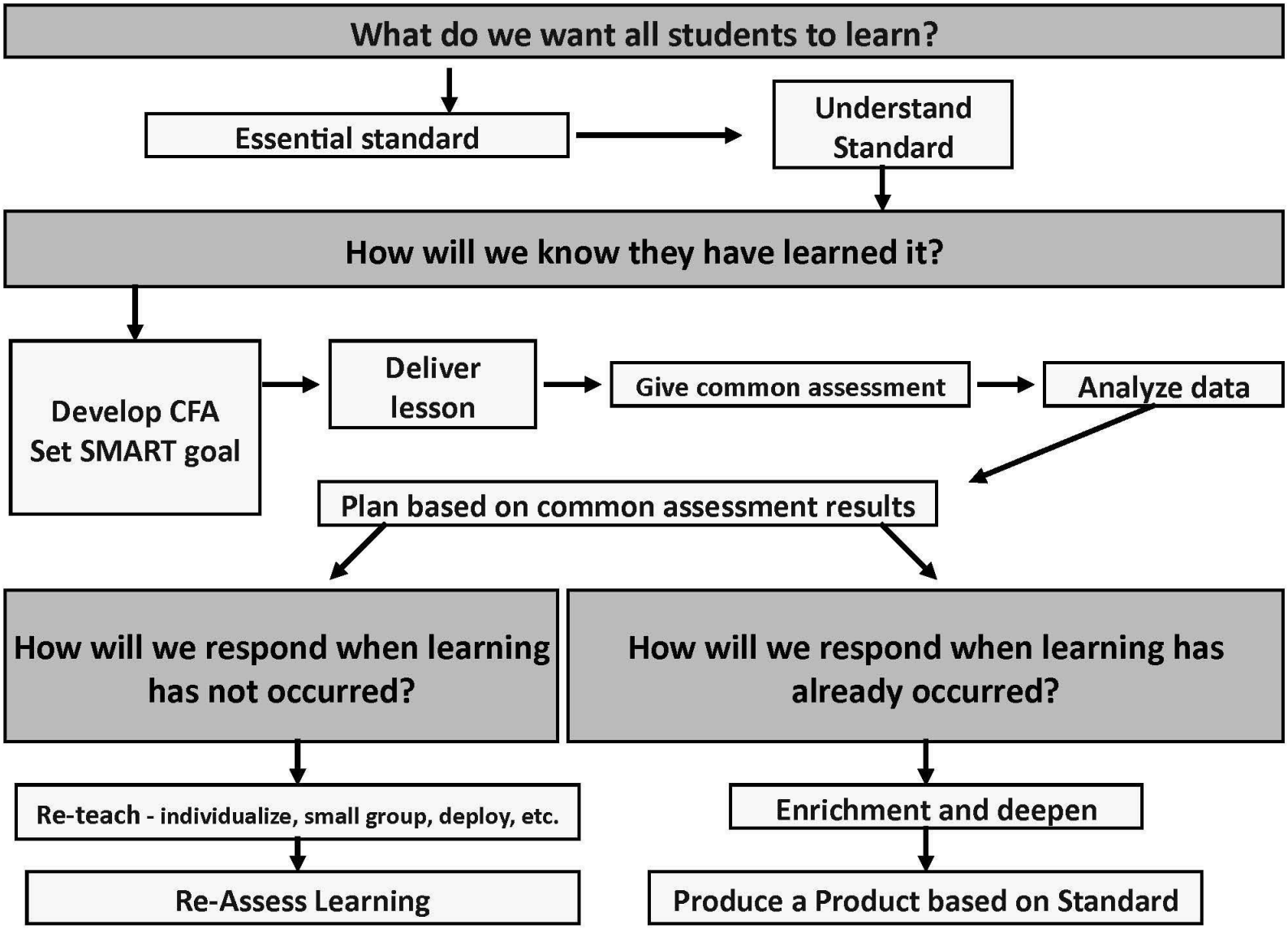

What do we want all students to learn?
Essential standard
Understand Standard
How will we know they have learned it?
Develop CFA Set SMART goal
Deliver lesson
Give common assessment
Analyze data
Plan based on common assessment results
How will we respond when learning has not occurred?
How will we respond when learning has already occurred?
Re-teach - individualize, small group, deploy, etc.
Re-Assess Learning
Enrichment and deepen
Produce a Product based on Standard

Professional Learning Community Rubric

Elements	Learning	Literal	Refinement	Internalized
Collaborative Culture **Educators work together in collaborative teams to achieve student learning.**	Teams meet regularly (weekly/bi-weekly/monthly) during the school day.	Collaborative teams develop written norms and establish learning goals that clarify expectations and commitments.	Teams focus on pre-arranged topics that impact student learning, and make revisions to goals to improve team effectiveness.	Teams honor their collective commitments to each other and our students in order to maximize learning.
Guaranteed Curriculum **Educators establish what we want our students to learn.**	Educators use district developed curriculum guide resources.	Educators work together to define the essential learning and establish pacing.	Educators build shared knowledge of current content standards, unpack high stakes assessments to clarify essential learning, and adjust instruction based on formative assessments.	Educators continually refine essential learning and guarantee a viable instructional program for all students.
Common Assessment **Educators determine if each student has learned what we want them to learn.**	Educators use benchmark assessments several times throughout the year.	Educators analyze student work and assessments and discuss common criteria.	Educators consistently apply common criteria to assess student work and discuss formative instructional practices.	Educators consistently utilize formative instructional practices, including common assessments, to gather evidence of student learning.
Ensuring Learning **Educators respond when some students have not learned it.**	Educators use school/district classes, established 'pull out' or after-school programs and curriculum resources when students are identified for intervention.	Educators provide students with additional time and support that does not remove the student from new direct instruction, when they experience difficulty.	Educators develop and utilize a timely, directive, and systemic plan for students when they experience difficulty.	Educators coordinate a flexible, supportive, and proactive system of intervention for students who experience difficulty.
Enriching Learning **Educators extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated mastery.**	Educators use school/district classes, established 'pull out' or after-school programs and curriculum resources for identified students.	Educators provide time and support for enrichment during the school day for those who have moved beyond the essential learning.	Educators develop and utilize a timely, directive, and systemic plan for students who have moved beyond the essential learning.	Educators coordinate a flexible, supportive, and proactive system for students who have moved beyond the essential learning.

Unwrapping the Standards

Common Formative Assessment: A Toolkit for Professional Learning Communities at Work

By Kim Bailey & Chris Jackicic

Foreword by Rebecca and Richard DuFour

Four Critical Questions That Guide the PLC Process

- Rebecca DuFour

1. What do we want students to know and be able to do?

2. How will we know when each student has acquired the essential knowledge and skills?

3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?

4. How will we extend and enrich the learning for students who are already proficient?

Formative Assessments

These four critical questions will help us to set the stage for common formative assessments, which is what our PLCs will eventually be revolved around

So now what? What are we supposed to be teaching?

- Standards are often written in terms that might be interpreted differently from teacher to teacher
- This process helps to achieve collective clarity and agreement regarding specific learning targets
- Allows us to identify specific learning targets which then helps when designing and aligning assessments

(p. 37)

All standards are…

1. A set of concepts that students must ultimately know or understand

2. A set of skills that students should be able to perform

- This is true, regardless of the state in which you teach or what set of standards that state has chosen to adopt.

(p. 39)

Step One: Focus on the Key Words

1. Circle the words that depict the skills; the things the students should be able to do **(VERBS)**

"Students will be able to…"

2. Underline the words that indicate the knowledge or concepts that students should know **(NOUNS)**

"Students will know…"

3. Highlight any **prepositional phrases**

"In what context…"

(p. 40)

What is it *really* trying to say?

Example CCSS--- Grade 5 ELA

Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent

CIRCLE THE **VERBS**

Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent

UNDERLINE THE **NOUNS**

Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent

HIGHLIGHT THE **PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES**

Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent

Step Two: Map It Out

What will the students do? **(VERBS)**	*With What Knowledge or Concepts?* **(NOUNS)**	*In What Context?* **(PREP. PHRASES)**
Analyze	Multiple accounts	Of the same event or topic
Note	Similarities and differences	In the point of view they represent

From **Standards** to *Learning Targets*

- Any achievement expectations for students on the path toward mastering a standard
- Should be formatively assessed to monitor progress toward an essential outcome

Learning Targets

Standard: Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting the similarities and differences in the point of view they represent

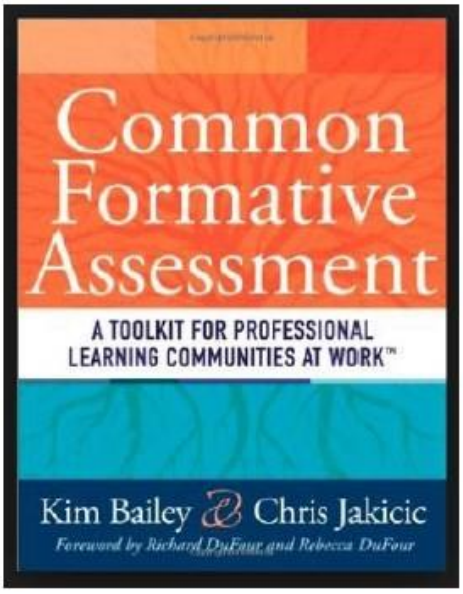
What will the students do? **(VERBS)**	With What Knowledge or Concepts? **(NOUNS)**	In What Context? **(PREP. PHRASES)**	**LEARNING TARGET**
Analyze	Multiple accounts	Of the same event or topic	Analyze multiple events of the same event or topic
Note	Similarities and differences	In the point of view they represent	Note similarities and differences in the point of view they represent

What do we want students to know? How do we know they are learning?

- Unwrapping reveals the learning targets contained within the standards
- Each team member walks back to his or her own classroom with the same picture of what students should know and be able to do, and has the same expectations for student learning

(p. 38)

"Teachers who truly understand what they want their students to accomplish will almost surely be more instructionally successful than teachers whose understanding of hoped-for student accomplishments are murky." (p. 16)



Bailey, K., & Jakicic, C. (2012). Common formative assessment: A toolkit for professional learning communities at WorkTM. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

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Corollary Questions and Collaborative Common Assessments

Corollary Questions of Effective Teaching Teams	Connection Between the Question and the Practice of Common Assessments
1. What do students need to know and be able to do?	Effective teams identify the essential knowledge and skill expectations for their learners based on required standards and in advance of any instruction. Teams backmap their assessment plans to align with their standard expectations (see figures 1.3 and 1.4 in chapter 1 as an example). Valid and reliable common assessments are contingent upon a team's ability to develop congruence with required expectations that are answered by corollary question 1.
2. How will we know when they have learned it and can do it?	Teaching teams can only answer this question through the work of common assessments. When teachers review their data in isolation, they frame their experiences and opinions, but the variables that lead to their results cannot be compared in a manner that helps them create information regarding what works and what doesn't work instructionally. Data can only provide information when reviewed in comparative ways against a valid benchmark; otherwise, they are simply random data points. Common assessments provide teams with the evidence needed to help teams answer corollary question 2. Collaborative common assessments are the engine of a PLC because they can drive teams to make more informed decisions regarding their practice.
3. How will we respond when students don't learn it?	Teams require the data and evidence generated from common assessments to answer corollary question 3. Reflection and analysis regarding their individual and collective results combined with collaborative problem solving provide the only means to help teams find the best way to target exact learning needs and demystify complex learning issues.
4. How will we respond when they already know it?	Enrichment, extension, and advancement are proving harder to address than interventions. In all of these activities, educators must help learners who have mastered content and skills to extend their learning. Enrichment does not mean doing more work, helping others to learn something they have *not* yet mastered, or moving to the next chapter. When teams design their common assessment products and processes, they plan for what a true enrichment might look like—one that is engaging and fun while building upon current learning targets that have been newly mastered in challenging ways. When teams design the enrichments in advance of instruction, they can increase motivation and understanding in the following ways. • They clarify even further their own understanding (and that of their learners) of what mastery will need to look like. • They pique interest in advance of instruction by showing learners the possibilities that lie before them if they master the expectations in a timely manner.

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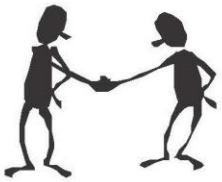
Generalizable Core Processes That Can Transcend Multiple Disciplines

Reading: Literature • Main ideas and details • Summarizing • Inference • Evaluation • Literary devices	**Reading: Informational Texts** • Key ideas and details • Craft and structure • Integration of knowledge and ideas • Range of reading and level of text complexity
Speaking and Listening • Expressing ideas • Communicating thinking • Productive nonverbals	**Writing** • Text types and purposes • Production and distribution of writing • Research to build and present knowledge • Range of writing
Mathematics • Computation • Problem solving • Communicating thinking • Measurement • Graphing • Mathematical reasoning	**Social Studies** • Sequencing • Pattern recognition • Prediction • Argumentation • Advocacy • Information literacy • Global literacy
Science • Asking questions and defining problems • Developing and using models • Conducting investigations • Analyzing and interpreting data • Constructing explanations and designing solutions • Engaging in argument from evidence • Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information	**Reasoning Skills and Modern Literacies** • Creating • Designing • Producing • Information literacy • Global literacy • Data literacy

A Balanced and Coherent System of Assessment

Classroom Assessments	Common Assessments	District Level Assessments	External Assessments
			
Most Formative	More Formative	More Summative	Most Summative
Daily	Weekly / Unit	Monthly	Semester / Annual
Ongoing Student and Teacher Formative Assessments	**Collaboratively Developed Common Formative Assessments**	**Collaboratively Developed District Benchmark Assessments**	**Annual State Mandated Summative Assessments**
Diagnostic and Prescriptive		**Calibrate and Pace the Curriculum**	**Ranks and Benchmarks Entrance and Exit Criteria**
	Identify Students Eligible for Support in a Pyramid of Interventions	**Identify Students Eligible for Ongoing Remedial and Programmatic Support**	