



The A, B, Cs of Professional Learning Communities

A — Focus on Learning

Focus on Learning Means ...

The fundamental purpose of the school is to ensure high levels of learning for all students.

This focus on learning translates into four critical questions that drive the daily work of the school. In a PLC framework, educators demonstrate their commitment to helping all students learn by working collaboratively in teams to address the following critical questions:

- 1) What do we want students to learn? What should each student know and be able to do as a result of each unit, grade level, and/or course?
 - 2) How will we know if they have learned? Are we monitoring each student's learning on a timely basis?
 - 3) What will we do if they don't learn? What processes are in place to provide additional time and support for students who are experiencing difficulty?
 - 4) What will we do if they already know it?
- Benchmarks are crystal clear of what we want students to know and be able to do
 - Each student's learning is monitored on a timely basis through frequent, formative assessments (how do we know)
 - Goal: Plan for Intervention/Enrichment is in place—directive and timely.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

As you think about the points above, what does "FOCUS ON LEARNING" mean for your team conversations? How might your conversations be different?

B — A Collaborative Culture

A Collaborative Culture Means ...

- **Collaboration** ... A systematic process in which we work together interdependently to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results.
- **Collaborative cultures**, which by definition have close relationships, are indeed powerful, but unless they are focusing on the right things they may end up being powerfully wrong. *Fullan*
- **Keys to Effective Teams**
 - ⇒ Collaboration, with the ON LEARNING, is embedded in routine practices
 - ⇒ Time is built in during the school day
 - ⇒ Team focuses on 4 key questions found below.
 - ⇒ Products of collaboration are the focus (*common assessments, results analyzed around common assessments, plans for intervention, etc.*)
 - ⇒ Team norms guide collaboration
- **Team meetings focus on the four questions:**
 - What is it that we expect students to learn?
 - How will we know when they have learned it?
 - How will we respond when they don't learn?
 - How will we respond when they already know it?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

What would a "collaborative culture" be about? Not about? What is one area you would like your team to focus on this year?

C — Focus on Results

Focus on Results Means ...

- **Effectiveness is based on results** — not intentions. Teams, individuals, schools seek relevant data and information. Teams then use the formative assessment results and data to provide students with interventions.
- Teams shift focus from inputs to **outcomes** ... from intentions to results.
- Teams pursue specific and measurable performance goals .. **SMART GOALS** which are strategic & specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and time-bound.
- Philosophy of just "my students" has to change to "**our students**," and we each have to take responsibility for all students.
- We know that without data, we're just individuals with an opinion. PLC members are hungry for evidence of student learning & use that evidence to inform & improve their practice.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

How will "focusing on results" guide your team's conversations? What specific results will be included in your conversations?



So, what does having a PLC really mean?



What will a collaborative culture do for a school?



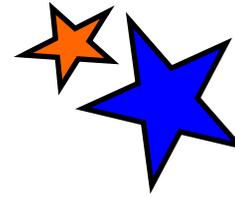
What would it look like if we all thought—“our kids” and not my kids?



How can analyzing our results really change our instruction?



Created and Adapted by Becky Hacker-Kliver Using Various Resources from DuFour’s Work



*The
ABCs
Of
Professional
Learning
Communities*

