



Professional Learning With Impact

Guidebook

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Jorie Ellis | Lee Kappes | Teresa Lien | Peggy Olcott
The Danielson Group

Tanya Batzel | Kellie Randall
Learning Forward



1720 W. Division Street
Chicago, IL 60622
www.danielsongroup.org



THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ASSOCIATION

800 E. Campbell Road, Suite 224
Richardson, TX 75081

www.learningforward.org

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Chapter 1: What Is Professional Learning With Impact?

Goals of Professional Learning With Impact

The Professional Learning With Impact (PLI) program engages teachers in sustained cycles of collaborative inquiry and one-on-one instructional coaching to overcome important student learning challenges. PLI empowers teachers with multiple, mutually reinforcing supports to accelerate their professional learning and implement improved instruction.

In PLI, teachers collaborate in teams to learn and refine solutions to vexing instructional challenges. They use the Framework for Teaching Clusters (FFT Clusters), their students' curricula, and evidence from the classroom as they engage in deep conversations about instruction with one another and with their PLI coaches. In PLI, teachers are supported to set their own learning goals and to then develop and implement a plan for achieving them.

The Danielson Group and Learning Forward—the organizations behind PLI—have long recognized the vital importance of high-quality teacher learning for ensuring high levels of student learning. They have teamed up to design PLI and support coaches and teachers as they conduct this important work and make their impact.

Organization of the PLI Guidebook

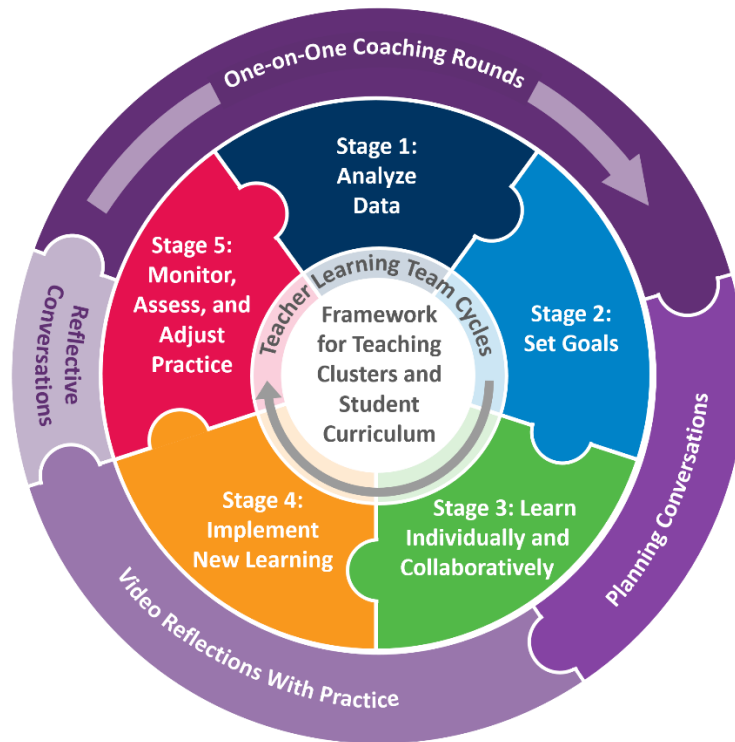
This guidebook describes the key structures and components of PLI and the purposes of each. It begins with an overview of the key inquiry and learning processes of the program and an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of each type of PLI participant. Chapter 2 describes the FFT Clusters and how they are applied in PLI. Chapter 3 provides an overview of skills and practices that PLI coaches need to fulfill their multifaceted roles, and Chapter 4 describes a 4- to 6-week induction phase that prepares participants for their work.

Chapters 5 and 6 delve into the collaborative inquiry and instructional coaching processes involved in PLI, and Chapter 7 provides tools for participant reflection. Finally, Chapter 8 pulls the PLI process together in an illustrative narrative. Further training and ongoing support will ensure that PLI teachers and coaches are able to apply the concepts, processes, and tools introduced in this guidebook.

Key Inquiry and Learning Processes in PLI

As indicated in Figure 1, there are two chief structures for teacher inquiry and learning in PLI: (1) teacher learning team cycles and (2) one-on-one coaching rounds. These structures are centered on the FFT Clusters and student curriculum, and they occur in synchrony throughout the 2-year program.

Figure 1. PLI Program Overview



An overview of each main component of PLI follows.

Learning Team Cycles

In PLI, each teacher learning team (TLT) is composed of teachers assigned to teach roughly the same curriculum to different students or teachers who teach different curricula but share the same students who have common student learning needs or goals. In TLTs, teachers collaboratively engage in the following five-stage cycle of inquiry:

1. **Analyze data** to identify a significant student learning challenge and its likely instructional root causes.
2. **Set goals** to galvanize and focus their work during the learning team cycle.
3. **Learn individually and collaboratively** to attain new knowledge and skills necessary to achieve their learning goals.
4. **Implement new learning**, such as new or refined skills, strategies, and practices, with support and monitoring for success.
5. **Monitor, assess, and adjust practice** to collaboratively review the evidence of teacher and student learning, make improvements for impact, and transfer learning to the next learning team cycle.

TLTs typically complete this cycle at least twice each year. In each stage, teachers engage in facilitated conversations about teaching using the language of the FFT Clusters. The cycle is structured to ensure that team time is used effectively while making teachers leaders of their own learning. With the support of their PLI coach, teams use processes and protocols that support teachers in learning collaboratively to achieve their learning goals. See Chapter 5 of this guidebook for a complete discussion of the PLI learning team cycle.

One-on-One Coaching

During each learning team cycle, individual team members also meet regularly with their PLI coach to engage in coaching rounds in a continuous coaching cycle of inquiry to grow teachers' individual practice aligned with the work of their teams. Each coaching round consists of (1) a planning conversation, (2) two or three video reflections and practice with debrief coaching conversations, and (3) a reflective conversation that connects the learning directly to the classroom. The coaching rounds encourage reflection on the FFT Clusters through routine practice with support from PLI coaches. The teachers' new skills become automatic, enabling purposeful instructional shifts in real time based on what is happening with students in the classroom. See Chapter 6 for an in-depth discussion of the PLI coaching round.

Synchronous Inquiry Anchored in the FFT Clusters

Coaching rounds and TLT cycles are synchronous and aligned so that one-on-one coaching builds on and complements the collaborative learning occurring in the TLTs. The FFT Clusters, described in the next chapter, anchor the work and learning in PLI by providing a common language for professional conversation and an analytical tool for understanding and addressing student learning challenges.

Figure 2 depicts the complementary flow of work across team cycles and coaching rounds in the first year of PLI, including the approximate time frame for PLI activities. To prepare teachers for their intense work in PLI, a preparatory workshop is provided to all participants before the start of the program, and an extended induction phase occurs during the first 4–6 weeks of the school year. During the induction phase, teachers become familiar with the FFT Clusters and begin to use them as a lens for learning and improvement. For more information about the induction phase, see Chapter 4.

Figure 2. PLI Learning Flow

Approximate Time Frame (Weeks)	◀◀	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	▶▶	
Teacher Learning Team Cycles (PLI coach facilitates weekly TLT meetings)	Coach & Teacher Preparatory Workshops	TLT Induction Phase (4–6 weeks)						Learning Team Cycle 1												Learning Team Cycle 2 ▶▶						
								Stage 1													Stage 1					
								Stage 2														Stage 2				
								Stage 3														Stage 3				
								Stage 4																		
One-on-One Coaching Rounds (PLI coach and individual teacher meet 4–6 times per round)	Coach & Teacher Preparatory Workshops	Coaching Induction Phase														Stage 5										
								Planning Conversation		2–3 Video Reflections with Debriefs and Practice				Reflective Conversation								Planning Conversation		2–3 Video Reflections with Practice ▶▶		
								Coaching Round 1														Coaching Round 2 ▶▶				

The Web-Based PLI Platform

To support the TLTs and one-on-one coaching, PLI uses a web-based platform called Whetstone. Coaches will document the TLTs' discussions in Whetstone, and teachers and coaches will use the platform for video reflections as part of the one-on-one coaching. See the Whetstone user guide for detailed instructions on how to navigate the platform.

Key Roles in PLI

Both teachers and PLI coaches are integral to PLI and engage as partners in teacher learning. Program specialists from Learning Forward and the Danielson Group provide direct support to PLI coaches throughout the program. This section provides an overview of the dual role that coaches play as well as a general description of the roles that teachers and program specialists play in PLI. More details about their specific responsibilities are included in the chapters that follow.

PLI Teachers

In PLI, teachers are leaders of their own learning, guided by PLI structures and processes and supported by their PLI coaches. They assume responsibility for their learning, and they support their colleagues to learn. The teachers engage in collaboration with honesty, respect, and vulnerability, trusting peers and the PLI coach to commit openly to the inquiry process. They connect their learning to what students need and embrace continuous improvement as professionals.

PLI Coaches

In PLI, coaches have a dual role as both team facilitators and one-on-one instructional coaches.

The coach as *team facilitator*. As an expert in the TLT cycle, a coach is a facilitator who helps the team free itself from internal obstacles or difficulties so members may more efficiently and effectively accomplish their goals. In addition, the coach maintains safety and trust among members and appreciates and values what each person contributes. The TLT coach also guides the team's work without directing it, protects the team from external distractions to maintain focus on critical student learning and instructional challenges, helps the team discover ways to address challenges, and brings structures and processes to help the team accomplish its goals.

The coach as *one-on-one coach*. As an expert in the FFT Clusters, a coach is a partner and champion for a teacher to explore and learn about instruction within the context of the teacher's practice. A coach understands the nature of adult learning and pedagogy and helps the teacher apply knowledge and skills to his or her daily work. The relationship between the PLI coach and the teacher honors a teacher-led, nonjudgmental, nonevaluative dialogue focusing on individual and collaborative development of instructional knowledge and skills.

In addition to these two critical roles, the PLI coach:

- Communicates regularly with school administrators to ensure that teachers have adequate time and space to accomplish team activities.
- Uses the PLI platform to archive team documents and products.
- Keeps updated records to document team and individual progress.
- Engages in individual coaching with PLI program specialists and attends learning sessions with other coaches in the PLI project.

PLI Program Specialists

Experts from the Danielson Group and Learning Forward provide PLI coaches with initial preparation and ongoing support throughout the program. As designers of the PLI program, they create materials and structures to support program participants. They bring and share expertise during each step of the work and adjust their support to meet the needs of coaches throughout the program.

Glossary of Key PLI Terms

Coaching round: A one-on-one coaching round consists of a planning conversation, two or three video reflections with practice sessions, and a reflective conversation. A Professional Learning With Impact (PLI) coach and teacher will meet four to six times per coaching round.

Collaborative learning plan: The schedule/agenda for team learning developed and implemented in Stage 3 of the learning team cycle prior to implementing new or refined skills, strategies, or practices in the classroom in Stage 4.

Framework for Teaching Clusters (FFT Clusters): A set of descriptions of skilled teaching that serves as the common vision and language for instruction in the PLI program.

Individual Teacher Learning Goal: The goal for individual teacher learning is based on the Team Learning Goal, which is based on the Student Learning Goal. Developed in one-on-one coaching rounds.

Learning team cycle: A five-stage cycle of collaborative inquiry used by teacher learning teams and facilitated by a PLI coach.

Likely instructional root cause: the teacher learning teams identify the instructional factors likely contributing to impacting the identified student learning challenge.

PLI coach: A district or school staff person who provides one-on-one instructional coaching directly to teachers and facilitates group learning in learning team cycles.

PLI platform: The website and video sharing platform where coaches and teachers conduct video reflections and document learning goals, agendas, and outcomes. The platform is hosted by Whetstone Education.

PLI program specialist: A specialist from the Danielson Group or Learning Forward who provides direct monitoring and support for PLI coaches in their facilitation and coaching roles.

Student learning challenge: The aspect of student learning identified by teacher learning teams through a careful analysis of data and the curriculum as being important to address in a learning team cycle.

Student Learning Goal: The goal for student learning identified by teacher learning teams based on the student learning challenge as well as upcoming learning targets.

Teacher learning team (TLT): A team of teachers who share collective responsibility for a group of students in the same grade level or course and who work as a professional learning community to engage in learning team cycles of inquiry using the FFT Clusters to foster instructional improvement.

Team Learning Goal: The goal for collective learning or improvement for each learning team cycle identified by TLTs based on the Student Learning Goal and teachers' reflections on their own current practice.

Notes

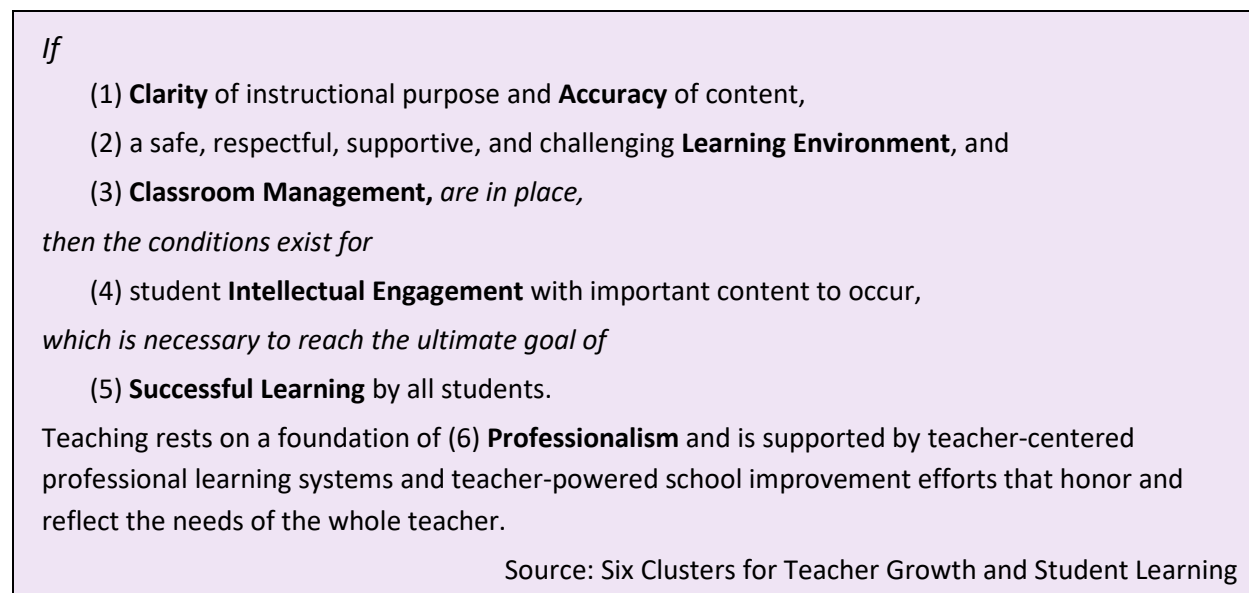
Chapter 2: The FFT Clusters in PLI

What Are the FFT Clusters?

The FFT Clusters describe skills demonstrated by accomplished teachers in promoting high levels of student performance. They provide a common language and a guide as PLI participants engage in a dialogue of self-reflection, self-assessment, data analysis, and instructional practice throughout the program.

The FFT Clusters build on the original Framework for Teaching and align to it, as discussed in Appendix A, yet offer a distinct structure with advantages for use in collaboration and coaching. The structure begins with six aspects of teaching, each serving as one Cluster. Altogether, the Clusters connect teaching and student learning, as shown in Figure 3, in which the shorthand label for each Cluster appears in bold.

Figure 3. The Six FFT Clusters and Their Connections



Each FFT Cluster contains five key features, which are unpacked in various and purposeful ways during professional conversations in PLI:

- A **NARRATIVE** description of the content of each FFT Cluster and the assumptions that underlie them.
- Three **FOCUS AREAS** for each FFT Cluster to help guide professional conversations.
- A set of **CONSIDERATIONS** to prompt inquiry, reflection, and goal setting for each FFT Cluster.

- A set of **INDICATORS** that deepen the understanding for analysis of each FFT Cluster.
- A **CONTINUUM OF PRACTICE** for each FFT Cluster containing descriptors to guide professional conversations and teaching improvements.

All five features of the FFT Clusters are described in ***Six Clusters for Teacher Growth and Student Learning*** in Appendix A. The focus areas and considerations questions are presented in Appendix B: **FFT Clusters SmartCard**.

The *Six Clusters for Teacher Growth and Student Learning* document also highlights the common themes that permeate all FFT Clusters: equity, cultural competence, high expectations, developmental appropriateness, attention to individual students, and student assumption of responsibility. Teachers will be supported to understand the implications of these themes throughout PLI.

How Are the FFT Clusters Applied in PLI?

The inquiry and learning processes in PLI position the teacher as the learner as teachers apply the FFT Clusters regularly. The common language provided by the FFT Clusters permits both the development of shared understandings and meaningful professional conversation. Assumptions about the nature of learning and a specific understanding of how to promote it are implicit in the FFT Clusters. The Clusters promote a constructivist view of learning. It is the learner who does the learning, and it is the job of the PLI coach to arrange for that learning to occur among teachers anchored in the FFT Clusters.

The FFT Clusters are used in each aspect of PLI as follows:

- **Initial self-reflection and orientation.** Teachers receive an initial orientation to the six FFT Clusters, after which they self-reflect using the continuum-of-practice descriptors in the *Six Clusters for Teacher Growth and Student Learning* document. This is the first step in learning to analyze their practice using the FFT Clusters descriptors.
- **PLI induction phase.** Teachers build their knowledge of the FFT Clusters, gaining additional practice in using them to analyze instruction.
- **Learning team cycles.** Teachers use the FFT Clusters as an analytic tool as they progress from identifying important student learning challenges and root causes to setting goals for team and individual learning, to exploring as well as trying new instructional skills and practices. Teachers learn to use the FFT Clusters narratives, focus areas, considerations, and continuum-of-practice descriptors.

- **Coaching rounds.** The coach gives teachers one-on-one support focused on making progress toward individual teacher learning goals grounded in the FFT Clusters.
- **End-of-year self-reflection.** Teachers analyze their practice using the FFT Cluster descriptors to assess their professional learning and growth.

The remainder of this manual describes more specifically how the FFT Clusters are used in each of the PLI processes.

Notes

Chapter 3: PLI Coach Skills and Practices Overview

Through their many responsibilities in implementing the PLI model with teachers, PLI coaches employ a range of skills and practices to support teachers' continuous improvement, both in teams and as individuals. The two sections in this chapter offer a brief overview of the skills essential for the PLI coach, with references for participants to use to go deeper.

Elements of Effective Conversation Skills and Practices

As Charlotte Danielson writes in her book, *Talk About Teaching!*, the “outcome of professional conversation depends overwhelmingly on the skill of the individual leading the conversation” (p. 71). Although conversations about practice occur between and among teachers and coaches in PLI, coaches are often tasked with promoting teacher thinking through skillful questioning and conversation.

Leading conversations that yield professional learning and instructional improvement requires linguistic skills and practices that include the following:

- **Building rapport** establishes trust and psychological safety through the use of body language and tone of voice.
- **Making positive presuppositions** conveys a belief in a teacher's capability and willingness to learn and grow. Questions that embed positive presuppositions support teachers' beliefs in their ability to have an impact on student learning and refine their professional practice.
- **Asking nondichotomous (open-ended) questions** extends and enhances thinking. Dichotomous questions are questions that can be answered “yes/no” and tend to shut down thinking.
- **Using plural forms** embedded within questions creates thinking around possible options, solutions, choices, and causes. Because there is not a single correct answer, true exploration can occur.
- **Asking probing questions** clarifies thinking and pushes for specificity around ideas, issues, options, and strategies. There are times when a coach needs to unpack teachers' statements to refine their thinking.
- **Paraphrasing** frames teachers' statements in new and succinct ways, capturing the essence of the statements and communicating a coach's desire to understand the teachers' concerns or frames of reference. Paraphrasing also can reveal additional layers of meaning, and hearing their words in a different way can influence teachers' understanding.

These conversation skills require diligent, focused practice and commitment to continued refinements for use. They are important to master because they support analysis and adaptation of instructional practice, resulting in increased student learning.

PLI coaches will have multiple professional learning and support opportunities for improving their ability to lead effective coaching conversations in PLI.

Additional Reading

Buckingham, M., & Goodall, A. (2019, March–April). The feedback fallacy. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2019/03/the-feedback-fallacy>

Danielson, C. (2015). *Talk about teaching! Leading professional conversations*. Corwin.

Effective Learning Team Cycle Facilitation Skills and Practices

Effectively facilitating collaborative conversations about teaching and learning requires PLI coaches to have a skill set that includes the set of linguistic skills and practices listed above, as well as the set of facilitation skills and strategies described below.

As TLT facilitators, PLI coaches have a complex set of responsibilities:

- The PLI coach outlines the work of the five-stage learning cycle for the TLT and supports them in accomplishing the work through skillful facilitation. As team members assume more responsibility for leading their own learning, the coach nurtures the development of their collaboration skills through modeling and explicit instruction in facilitation.
- The PLI coach supports the team in developing norms or expectations for how its members will collaborate and hold one another accountable for applying the norms.
- The PLI coach ensures equity of voice and guides the team in using communication skillfully to arrive at decisions, address disagreements, and share multiple points of view.
- The PLI coach creates a safe learning environment where trust can grow, and learners can openly explore challenges and take risks as well as celebrate success and progress.

In addition, at each stage of the learning team process, the PLI coach may need to serve as the process expert—for example, in helping analyze data or use the FFT Clusters effectively to set goals. When necessary, the PLI coach recommends procedures and strategies for accomplishing goals. The PLI coach may need to address assumptions and challenges that threaten the team’s ability to reach its goals by checking perceptions or addressing barriers. Guiding ongoing

reflections of the team's effectiveness and results is an important responsibility of the PLI coach as a facilitator. Finally, the PLI coach will monitor the pacing of TLT stages and protocols and use of the PLI platform.

To accomplish this work, PLI coaches will be supported to employ and refine the following strategies and practices:

- Develop an agenda for every meeting that includes the goals and protocol the team will be working toward, and share it with the team before each meeting.
- Regularly rotate various team roles, including recorder and timekeeper, among members.
- Establish, model, and regularly revisit norms for participation; for example, honoring multiple voices.
- Purposefully allot some time for members to connect personally before digging into meeting content, perhaps with an icebreaker or check-in question.
- Practice and model norms of collaboration, such as active listening, paraphrasing, probing, checking assumptions, and distinguishing between dialogue and discussion.
- Vary meeting and learning designs to honor multiple preferences and encourage deeper engagement. Select and implement appropriate collaboration or facilitation methods to fit the goals of a particular meeting.

Skillfully and consistently implementing these practices is challenging but necessary for successful collaboration and team learning.

Additional Reading

Jolly, A. (2008). *Team to teach: A facilitator's guide to professional learning teams*. National Staff Development Council.

Killion, J. (2013). *School-based professional learning for implementing the Common Core: Facilitating learning teams*. Learning Forward.

School Reform Initiative. (n.d.). *Protocols*.

<https://www.schoolreforminitiative.org/protocols/>

Notes

Chapter 4: First 4–6 Weeks—The PLI Induction Phase

After the initial preparatory workshops, PLI begins with a short induction phase. Coinciding with the first 4–6 weeks of school, this phase gives the PLI coach and teachers time to get to know their students as well as to build a common vision for their work together in PLI. In this phase, participants will:

- Develop an understanding of the PLI model.
- Deepen their understanding of and skill with the FFT Clusters, building a shared language to examine instruction.
- Develop an understanding of the TLT cycle and its five stages.
- Strengthen professional relationships among the team and PLI coach as they learn more about one another.
- Establish and practice shared norms for collaboration.
- Begin to cultivate a climate of trust and a culture of learning.

PLI coaches will help participants achieve these goals in the first 4–6 weeks in both their weekly TLT meetings and one-on-one coaching sessions.

Team Learning During the Induction Phase

Before beginning their first learning team cycle, teams meet in their TLTs to get to know one another (if they do not already), establish norms for collaboration, and begin to build a shared language of teaching using the FFT Clusters. This first 4–6 weeks of the PLI induction period may overlap with whole-school collaborative efforts and professional learning.

After time spent on developing norms and establishing the foundations of a collaborative culture, the PLI coach and learning team will review their recent introduction to PLI and continue to deepen their awareness of the PLI program overall, including their roles and responsibilities and the expected workflow. With portions of this manual on hand, team members and the coach will review the model and stages and will set expectations for themselves.

The PLI coach will then use subsequent TLT sessions in this induction phase to explore the learning cycle stages, walking through each stage as described in Chapter 5 and previewing the protocol for each stage and how it will be used. The team will begin to consider and collect the student learning data and information they will bring to bear in Stage 1 of the team learning cycle. To prepare for Stage 1, teams might look at available school-wide data or standardized assessment information to begin to anchor their knowledge of student needs.

The narrative example presented in Chapter 8 was created to help participating teachers visualize PLI in action and understand how the coach supports team and individual learning in the collaborative setting and in simultaneous coaching rounds. During the induction process, the PLI coach may choose to use the narrative piece by piece to make the abstract more concrete or as an early reading to set the context for putting the model into action.

As the team becomes familiar with the PLI program, the coach facilitates professional development (PD) team-learning sessions so that teachers learn more about the FFT Clusters. These sessions are intended to help teachers see the relevance of FFT Clusters to their practice.

Through these learning sessions, teams explore the underlying concepts and themes of the FFT Clusters. They learn how the FFT Clusters have been built on foundational understandings about what constitutes important learning, what causes learning, how students are motivated, what intelligence is, and how students' views influence their actions. Teams will discuss how the themes of equity, cultural competence, developmental appropriateness, student assumption of responsibility, attention to individual students, and high expectations are common across the FFT Clusters. They will practice using the five features of the FFT Clusters (e.g., focus areas, considerations). This deepened understanding will support team members' analyses and conversations about practice throughout PLI.

One-on-One Coaching During the Induction Phase

The first introductory coaching round in PLI takes place during the induction phase. This first round of coaching is quite different from those of subsequent rounds because it focuses primarily on building a solid foundation for learning in PLI. During these initial one-on-one conversations, the PLI coach supports teachers in understanding the coaching principles and processes in which they are about to engage. Figure 4 describes each of the three parts of this introductory coaching round.

Figure 4. Introductory Coaching Round During the Induction Phase

Introductory meeting (20–30 minutes)	The PLI coach will meet individually with each teacher for an informal introductory meeting as an induction to coaching. The coach will learn about the teacher as a practitioner, and the teacher will learn about the coach as a partner in learning.
Classroom visit (20–30 minutes)	The PLI coach will visit each teacher's classroom to get to know the students and the class environment. To understand how to support the teacher in implementing new instructional strategies, the PLI coach must be familiar with the teacher's students.
Debrief (20–30 minutes)	The debrief will be a conversation to commence the coaching so the teacher is assured of being understood as both a learner and a professional. The PLI coach and teacher will discuss the teacher's students and the aspirations for their learning.

Notes

Chapter 5: Learning Team Cycles in PLI

Introduction

In PLI, teacher teams follow the structure for collaborative inquiry described by Stephanie Hirsh and Tracy Crow in their book, *Becoming a Learning Team*. The five-stage learning team cycle was developed based on years of research and experience on what works in educator professional learning. This team cycle is unique from others in that it explicitly outlines an adult learning stage as part of a continuous improvement process. The team cycles support lasting teacher learning as teachers work with colleagues to learn new practices and skills relevant to their students and the challenges they face and to collaboratively design and support one another's implementation of improved instruction. In PLI, the FFT Clusters anchor teachers' conversations about practice in order to maximize their learning.

This chapter describes the five learning-team cycle stages, including their purpose, principles, and key actions of PLI participants—both teachers and coaches. This section focuses on team activities but notes connections with the simultaneous one-on-one coaching rounds, which are described in more depth in Chapter 6.

Stage 1: Analyze Data

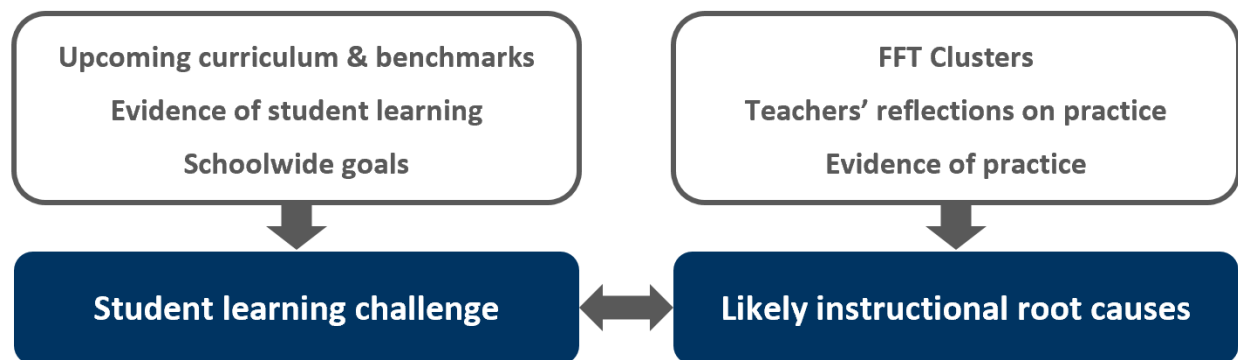
Purpose

Stage 1 of the learning team cycle supports teams as they identify important student learning challenges and discuss likely instructional root causes of those challenges. Teams examine multiple sources of evidence to come to an agreement on what particular set of challenges the team will address in this cycle.

As depicted in Figure 5, teams examine their students' curriculum and benchmark expectations, schoolwide goals, and evidence of learning. These inform the teams' decisions to focus on particular student learning challenges. Evidence of student learning could include data from formative assessments, observational notes, student writing samples, end-of-unit assessments from a previous unit, performance tasks, and student reflections in addition to more standardized, large-scale assessments.

Teams then generate ideas about how their instruction might be contributing to, or failing to fully address, the student learning challenge. Teams use the FFT Clusters, their reflections on their own practice aided by the FFT Clusters self-assessment, or other evidence of practice (e.g., lesson plans or previous peer feedback) to inform their discussions about likely instructional root causes. Figure 5 depicts this process.

Figure 5. TLT Stage 1: Analyze Data Component Map



A protocol for Stage 1 is included later in this chapter. This protocol lists the steps, questions, and decisions with which teams grapple during this stage of the learning team cycle. See Chapter 8 for a concrete narrative example of what this stage might look like for a hypothetical fourth-grade TLT.

Guiding Principles

Teams that enter this stage with a curiosity about student learning and how it is measured, a willingness to examine their own practices through the lens of the FFT Clusters, and an ability to suspend judgment about their findings will likely be more successful. Although student learning challenges often have many root causes, teachers are encouraged to focus solely on those likely causes that are within their control—namely, instructional challenges or gaps in teaching skills, strategies, practices, or materials they use in classrooms (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Example Data Summary and Root Cause(s)

Data Summary Statement:

75% of our fourth graders continue to struggle with using mathematical models to demonstrate their thinking as shown by the last district benchmark assessment.

Root Cause Statement:

The learning tasks we have provided for mathematical models have not required students to engage intellectually and instead have asked them to follow a procedure.

Guiding Questions

Teachers explore the following guiding questions in this stage:

- *What data will best help determine the student learning challenges we may face in the curriculum ahead?*
- *What do the data tell us?*
- *What are the possible instructional causes of the challenges we have identified?*
- *Which aspect(s) of our teaching, as described in the FFT Clusters narratives, might we strengthen to address the student learning challenge?*

Key Actions for Stage 1: Analyze Data

Figure 7 lists the primary team and coach actions needed to complete Stage 1.

Figure 7. Key TLT and Coach Stage 1—Actions

Key Team Actions	Key Coach Actions
TLT Cycle Stage 1: Analyze Data	TLT Cycle Stage 1: Analyze Data
Teams use the <i>Stage 1 Protocol, Identifying Student Learning Challenges and Instructional Root Causes</i>, page 24, to: • Identify and collect essential data on teaching and student learning. • Review upcoming student curricula. • Ask questions of the data and collaboratively summarize the team’s insights. • Use the FFT Clusters narrative and focus areas to identify likely instructional root causes of the student learning challenge.	The PLI coach facilitates the team’s completion of the <i>Stage 1 Protocol</i> by: • Helping the team collect and organize relevant student learning data. • Supporting the team’s use of data analysis tools if necessary. • Facilitating professional conversations among the team to interpret and summarize the data, narrowing the focus to an important student learning challenge. • Using the FFT Clusters narrative and focus areas to identify the instructional root cause(s) of the student learning challenge; that is, teaching skills and practices that may need adopting or strengthening to address the challenge. • Uploading the completed protocol to the PLI platform. Throughout the stage, the PLI coach works to: • Reinforce norms for collaboration. • Ensure equity of voice. • Model FFT Clusters language. • Track the team’s progress and decisions in the TLT Facilitation Log.

Additional Tools and Resources

See the PLI platform for the following additional tools and resources:

- Protocols to support collaborative interpretation of student learning data.
- Crafting a data summary statement (Tool 3.4 from *Becoming a Learning Team*). This tool assists teams with crafting data summary statements by providing examples and guiding questions and data worksheets.

Stage 1: Analyze Data Protocol

Stage 1 Protocol: Identifying Student Learning Challenges and Instructional Root Causes	
Purpose	To guide the team through the analysis of data to identify an important student learning challenge and likely instructional root causes.
Materials	FFT Clusters, FFT Clusters SmartCard, evidence of student learning from prior instruction, FFT Clusters self-assessment
Step 1: Identify and collect essential information on student learning.	
Consider the following sources for student learning data: student reflections, written responses, observational data, exit slips, products from performance-based tasks, and relevant formative and summative data from prior curricular unit. Consider schoolwide learning goals and curricular demands to focus the team's exploration.	
Key pieces of data considered:	
Step 2: Analyze student learning data.	
Make factual, objective observations of strengths and learning challenges using the following guiding questions as support: • How can we best display and organize these data? • What is being measured in these assessments? What were the performance expectations? • How did those students perform against those expectations? What surprised us/stood out in the data? • What patterns exist?	
Team response:	
Step 3: Write student learning data summary statements.	
Write concise, factual statements about student learning. Do not offer solutions, describe a cause, or assign blame. Avoid using linking terms such as <i>because</i> and <i>but</i> in this statement. Narrow the summary to one or two statements.	
Team response:	

Step 4: Identify likely instructional root causes.

Reflect on FFT Clusters self-reflections and FFT Clusters narratives. Consider patterns and trends across the team that may support a team focus.

Guiding questions:

- Which aspect(s) of our teaching, as described in the FFT Clusters narratives and focus areas, might we strengthen to address the student learning challenge?
- In order for our students to overcome the student learning challenge, what will we need to do in our practice? What instructional strategies will positively influence student performance?
- What insights do we gain about team members' particular strengths related to addressing the challenge?

Team response:

Step 5: Summarize instructional root causes.

Guided by the FFT Clusters narrative, continuum of practice, and focus areas, craft one or two concise, factual statements about the instructional root causes the team has identified as likely influencing the student learning challenges. What instructional strategies will change student learning?

Team response:

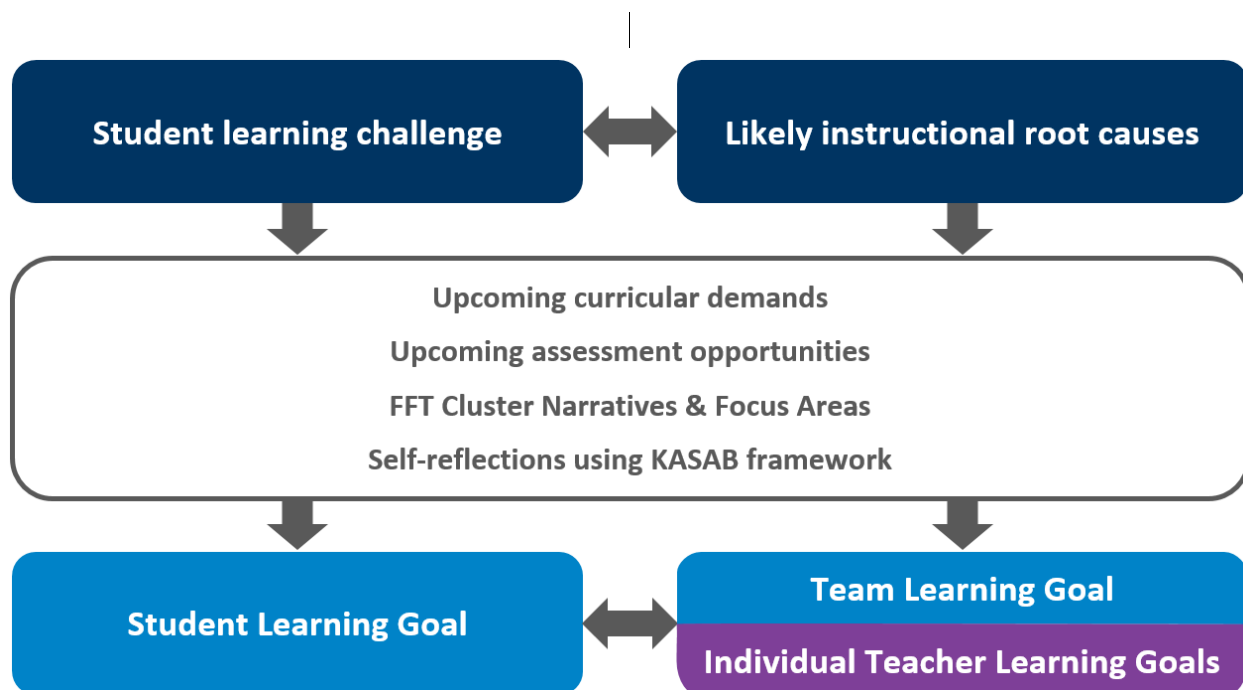
Stage 2: Set Goals

Purpose

Stage 2 supports teams as they set Student and Team Learning Goals that will drive the remainder of the learning team cycle. Student Learning Goals are based on the student learning challenge identified in Stage 1, as well as the demands of the student curriculum in use during the cycle. The Team Learning Goal articulates the knowledge and skills that TLT members need to develop to address the instructional root causes and help students achieve their learning goals. These teacher learning priorities are grounded in the FFT Clusters and are the foundation of the individual and collaborative learning accomplished in the next stage.

Figure 8 depicts the relationships between the key components of Stage 2, including the step that individual team members take during one-on-one coaching rounds (in purple), to identify an Individual Teacher Learning Goal based on Team and Student Learning Goals.

Figure 8. Stage 2: Set Goals Component Map



A step-by-step protocol that outlines the questions and decisions that teams make in this stage is included on page 29. See Chapter 8 for a concrete narrative example of what Stage 2 might look like for a fourth-grade TLT found on page 61.

Guiding Principles

As teams explore solutions to significant student learning challenges, it is important that they agree on their goals to help build clarity and commitment for collective action and intentionality about the steps they will take together to get there. The Student Learning Goal provides clarity on what students are to learn, and the Team Learning Goals pinpoint the pedagogy and content knowledge they need to develop to help students reach their goals.

It is important in this stage that teams articulate the critical link between student learning and their professional learning. Just as teachers set intentional goals for student learning, they also must be intentional about goals for their own learning. Teams cannot help students meet identified goals with the same level of knowledge, skill, and practice that helped lead to the student learning challenge.

Figure 9 includes some examples of Student Learning Goals, along with the Team Learning Goal statements that match.

Figure 9. Examples of Student and Team Learning Goals

Student Learning Goal	Team Learning Goal
During the first semester of the 2020–21 school year, 100% of South School students in fourth grade who scored below benchmark on the fall writing assessment for conventions will improve their writing based on an increase of one in their rubric score by the winter writing assessment by demonstrating command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and complete sentences when writing.	If the fourth-grade team learns how to create instructional activities on conventions so that the lesson structure and flow allow for and support intellectual engagement and productive struggle giving students time to think, develop ideas, and reflect on their learning, then students will take initiative and understand the importance for command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and complete sentences when writing as measured by the district writing assessment.
By the end of the second quarter, fourth-grade students will demonstrate proficiency or above in understanding of the four concepts of text structure, moral, character traits, problem and solution by explaining examples of each concept in writing a paragraph as measured by the district writing assessment.	If the team makes strategic modifications to their writing lessons so students use all four text structures in a short story by leveraging district sources of support based on the assessment of and for student learning and progress aligned to outcomes, then our students will demonstrate proficiency with text structure, moral, character traits and problem and solution.

Sample Goals When Teams Are Composed of Teachers of Different Subjects

By the end of the school year, fourth-grade students will be able to write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence, in a formal style.

By the end of the school year, fourth-grade students will be able to analyze real-world scenarios using mathematical models to interpret and solve problems.

In all of our instructional areas, students will learn to write on a range of tasks, and for different purposes and audiences, as measured by our district writing assessment. Student writing samples will be assessed at the beginning of the second quarter and at the end of the fourth quarter. Every student will improve by 1 in each of the instructional areas.

Guiding Questions

Teachers explore the following overarching guiding questions in this stage:

- *What do we expect students to learn or be doing differently by the end of our learning cycle?*
- *How can we express our Student Learning Goals in the Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound (SMART) format?*
- *How will we use the FFT Clusters features to inform our Team and Individual Teacher Learning Goals?*
- *What data will we collect to document student and educator progress toward goals?*

Key Actions for Stage 2: Set Goals

Figure 10 describes what teachers and coaches are accomplishing in Stage 2.

Figure 10. Key Team and Coach Actions During Stage 2: Set Goals

Key Team Actions	Key Coach Actions
TLT Cycle Stage 2: Set Goals	TLT Cycle Stage 2: Set Goals
Teams build on their work in Stage 1 to complete the <i>Stage 2 Protocol, Writing Team Learning and Student Learning Goals</i>, (found on page 29) by: - Using the SMART framework to collaboratively write a Student Learning Goal related to the student learning challenge identified in Stage 1. - Using the FFT Cluster features, create a Team Learning Goal statement that outlines the instructional practices that your team will develop to address the student learning challenge identified in Stage 1.	The PLI coach facilitates TLT conversations about practice to set goals using the FFT Clusters focus areas, considerations, and continuum-of-practice descriptors. Complete and upload the <i>Stage 2 Protocol, Writing Educator and Student Learning Goals</i>. Throughout the stage, the PLI coach works to: - Reinforce norms for collaboration. - Ensure equity of voice. - Model FFT Clusters language. - Track the team's progress in the TLT Facilitation Log.
One-on-one coaching. Planning conversations for the one-on-one coaching rounds begin in this stage. Teachers work individually with their coach to draft an Individual Teacher Learning Goal related to Student and Team Learning Goals.	

Stage 2 Protocol

Stage 2 Protocol: Writing Team and Student Learning Goals	
Purpose	To guide analysis of summary statements that leads to a Student Learning Goal statement and educator learning statement.
Materials	Student learning data summary statements, FFT Clusters, SMART framework
Step 1: Review upcoming learning units.	
Scan the unit materials that will be the focus of the TLT cycle. Consider the following: - What are the identified learning targets/essential outcomes? - Where are the opportunities within this unit to address the team's identified student learning challenges? - How will students be assessed in our upcoming unit? - For teams with teachers of different subjects, what opportunities exist for common Student Learning Goals across curricular areas?	

Upcoming Unit Review	What does this unit require of students? What does this unit require of our instruction?
Step 2 : Craft Student Learning Goal.	
Review your student learning data summary statements. These statements reflect the current state of learning. The goal you are writing as a team should reflect your desired state.	
SMART Elements	Specific: What exactly do you want students to learn? Measurable: How will the learning be monitored and measured? Attainable: What can we reasonably expect students to attain, and what can we control and influence? Relevant: How will we connect the curriculum, standards, and essential outcomes for students in the unit that is the focus of this cycle? Time-Bound: When will we measure our success and complete the cycle?
Refine the goal if any of the elements above are not sufficiently addressed. Write the goal that describes what you want to see in student learning at the end of the team learning cycle in a concise statement that contains the applicable SMART elements.	
Student Learning Goal:	
Step 3 : Write Team Learning Goals.	
Use the FFT Clusters focus areas and descriptors in the proficient and distinguished continuum of practice create a Team Learning Goal statement that outlines the instructional practices that your team will develop to address the instructional root causes identified in Stage 1. Statement can be written in the form of if _____, then _____.	
Team Learning Goal:*	

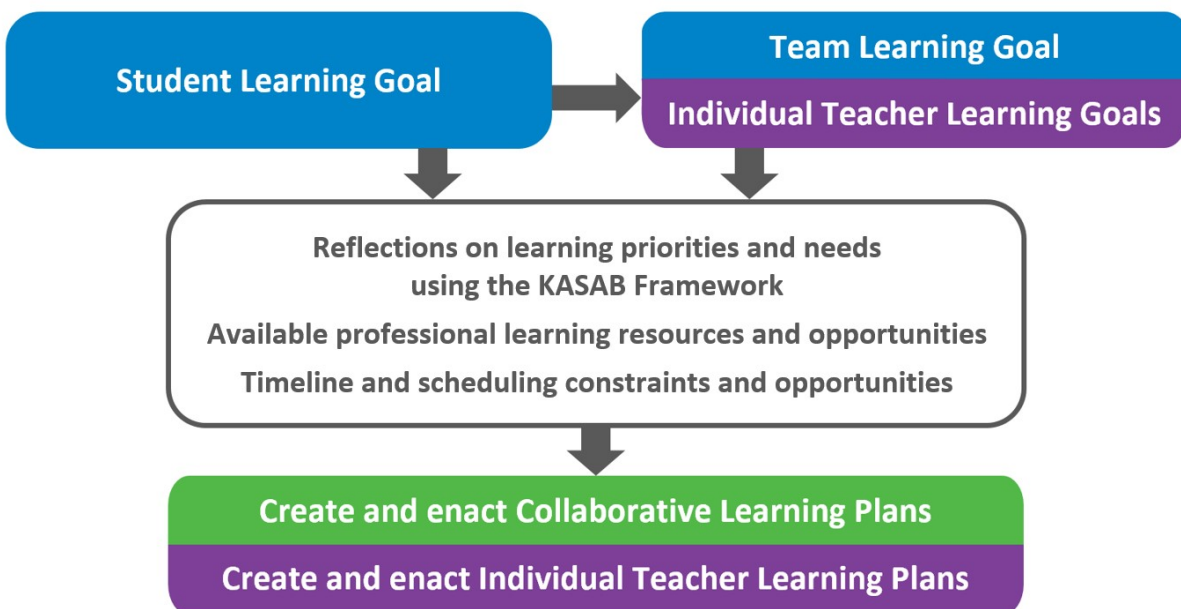
Stage 3: Learn Individually and Collaboratively

Purpose

In this stage, TLTs address the question, *How will we engage in learning together and individually to achieve desired outcomes for our students?* As they discuss answers to that question, teachers craft collective and individual learning plans that reflect the identified learning challenges (identified in Stage 1) and goals (identified in Stage 2). The development and implementation of a learning plan is important because as teachers test new practices and skills in their classrooms in the next stage, they must first learn more about—and perhaps even rehearse—the skills, strategies, and practices that reflect the state of knowledge and art in the wider field.

Learning plans may include a set of articles to read, podcasts to listen to, videos to watch, webinars to take, state or district PD programs to enroll in, experts to interview, classrooms to visit, classes to take, and so forth. The whole team or just parts of the team can choose to engage in these activities. The collaborative learning in this stage may take many forms but is closely connected to the curriculum and the FFT Clusters. A built-in support for individual learning in PLI is the one-on-one coaching rounds. Figure 11 depicts the key components of Stage 3 and some of the factors that inform the team’s development of its learning plans.

Figure 11. Stage 3 Component Map



See Chapter 8 for an illustrative example of Stage 3 processes. The Stage 3 protocol listing the steps that TLTs take in this stage is included in the current chapter.

Guiding Principles

Teachers themselves know how they learn best, so they choose how and when they will engage in professional learning that is most relevant for achieving their learning goals. Learning discussed in this stage requires a growth mind-set and a comfort level with taking risks and trying new practices. Both collective and individual learning goals are valued and supported.

Guiding Questions

Teachers explore the following overarching questions in this stage:

- *What do we need to learn together and individually to achieve our goals?*
- *How and when will we learn what we need to learn?*
- *How and when will we practice our new knowledge and skills?*

Key Actions for Stage 3: Learn Individually and Collaboratively

Figure 12 describes what teachers and coaches are accomplishing in Stage 3.

Figure 12. Key Team and Coach Actions During Stage 3

Key Team Actions	Key Coach Actions
TLT Cycle Stage 3	TLT Cycle Stage 3
Teams use the Stage 3 Protocol, <i>Developing and Scheduling Team and Individual Learning</i>, to: • Use the KASAB Framework to consider teacher learning needs to meet goal. • Prioritize learning activities based on the Team Learning Goal. • Choose learning designs as a team. • Synthesize initial learning to set the stage for <i>Stage 4 Protocol: Supporting and Monitoring Implementation of Team Learning</i>.	The PLI coach: • Facilitates TLT conversations to match learning plans with learning goals. • Seeks out and shares additional learning resources for the team. • Works with school administrators on learning logistics. Complete and upload the <i>Stage 3 Protocol, Developing and Scheduling Team Learning Agenda</i>. Throughout the stage, the PLI coach works to: • Reinforce norms for collaboration. • Ensure equity of voice. • Model FFT Clusters language. • Keep it fun. • Track the team's progress in the TLT Facilitation Log.
One-on-one coaching. Based on the planning conversation started in the previous stage, teachers “finalize” their Individual Teacher Learning Goals and begin planning out their video reflections with practice. The PLI Coach tracks teachers’ progress in the One-on-One Coaching Logs.	

Additional Tools and Resources

Access the PLI platform for the following additional tools and resources for Stage 3:

- Sample Learning Agenda (Tool 5.5 from *Becoming a Learning Team*). This tool supports the team in developing a plan for their learning and acts as a guide as teams move through Stages 3–5.
- Examining Learning Designs (Tool 5.4 from *Becoming a Learning Team*). This additional tool extends the team’s knowledge of learning designs and becomes a reference for planning future learning.

Stage 3: Learn Individually and Collaboratively Protocol

Stage 3 Protocol: Developing and Scheduling Team Learning	
Purpose	To translate the Team Learning Goals into commitments and plans for reviewing curricular materials, studying instructional practices, and practicing new learning. Completing the three sections of this protocol will take several weeks.
Materials	FFT Clusters, curriculum materials, Student and Teacher Learning Goals, KASAB Framework, calendars
Step 1: Analyze goal through the lens of KASAB.	
Use the KASAB framework elements to unpack your Team Learning Goal.	Use the KASAB framework to ask the following of your goal statement: What <u>k</u>nowledge and or theories do we need to meet the Student Learning Goal? What <u>a</u>ttitudes or mindsets might we need to shift about our instruction/and or how students learn? What <u>s</u>kills specific to our Student Learning Goal do we need to develop/refine, and practice? In what ways are we motivated or will we <u>a</u>spire to apply our new knowledge and skills to support the Student Learning Goal? What <u>b</u>ehaviors or practices would demonstrate a new approach to teaching the content identified in the Student Learning Goal?
Describe what you as the educators commit to learn and practice by the end of the team learning cycle using the KASAB elements.	

KASAB Analysis	K: A: S: A: B:	
Step 2 : Create a plan for professional learning.		
Guiding questions for consideration: • What time frame is available for our learning prior to implementation? • What new instructional strategies and content knowledge might we need to help us address our Student and Teacher Learning Goals? As we scan the unit ahead of us, where will the implementation of our learning be most critical? • How will we learn together to gain the new knowledge and skills to address our identified goals? What professional learning models will be most powerful to us as a group? What opportunities might exist for extended learning time (e.g., substitute teachers, release time, coverage)? • Which content or lesson segments would we benefit from rehearsing or practicing together? • How and when will we practice our new knowledge and skills?		
What we'll learn together:	How we'll learn together:	When we'll learn together:
Step 3 Learn together.		
Guiding question: What are we learning individually in our coaching rounds that is influencing our collective learning?		
Team response:		
Guiding question: What are the key takeaways from learning together in this stage?		
Team response:		
Step 4 : Get ready to implement new learning.		
Guiding question: After learning together, what skills, strategies, or practices are we now collectively ready to implement?		
Team response:		

Stage 4: Implement New Learning

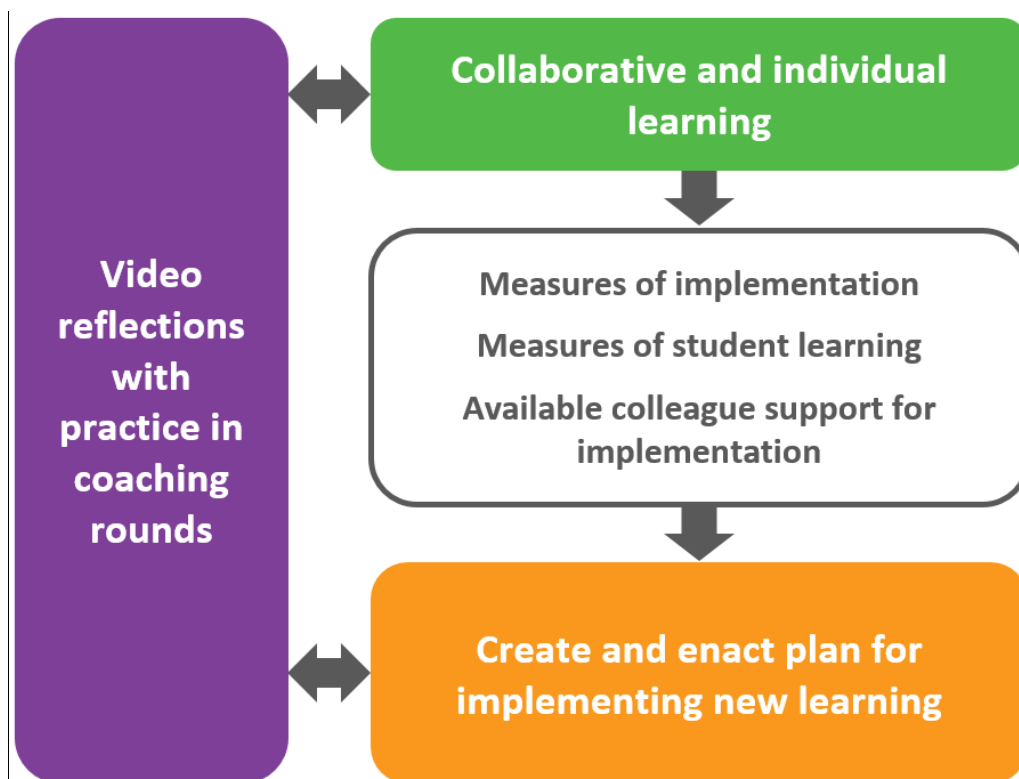
Purpose

In Stage 4, teachers identify and plan for appropriate opportunities to apply their new learning—including new or enhanced instructional skills, strategies, practices, and designs—in the classroom. In the previous stage, new strategies, skills, and behaviors were examined and practiced. In this stage, the team creates a plan for collectively implementing these new practices. As part of this plan, team members make decisions about what teaching and learning artifacts they should collect that will enable them to learn from implementation and begin to understand the impact of the changes they have made. They then support one another to enact their plans, implementing their new learning.

During this stage, teachers are fully engaging in one-on-one coaching rounds to support the application of their new learning as well as engaging in conversations with one another, connecting their new learning to their curriculum and the FFT Clusters.

Figure 13 depicts the relationships between the key components of Stage 4.

Figure 13. Stage 4: Implement New Learning—Component Map



See Chapter 8 for an illustrative example of Stage 4 processes. The Stage 4 protocol listing the steps that TLTs take in this stage to support and monitor the implementation of team learning is included later in the current chapter and can be accessed from the PLI platform.

Guiding Principles

Although teachers have had opportunities to learn about new skills, practices, and strategies in depth in Stage 3, and perhaps even to rehearse them, in Stage 4 they are bringing this new knowledge to the complex environment of the classroom. They also will receive feedback on their efforts in the form of student work and assessments, video records, and peer feedback. This process may be uncomfortable, so a safe space for teachers to openly share their learning and challenges needs to be intentionally cultivated and reinforced. Conversations must allow for the vulnerability involved in sharing practices, lessons, and reflections of the implementation process.

Guiding Questions

Teachers explore the following guiding questions in this stage:

- *How will we track the implementation of our new learning (i.e., changes to our instruction)?*
- *What evidence will we collect to guide discussion of the quality of implementation of our new learning?*
- *How will we know whether our changes are successful or not?*
- *What are we learning from the implementation of our changes?*
- *Where are we struggling and where could we benefit from additional support from a coach or peer?*

Key Actions for Stage 4: Implement New Learning

Figure 14 describes what teachers and coaches are accomplishing in Stage 4. This protocol reflects several weeks of work, and each step might represent a different meeting.

Figure 14. Key Team and Coach Actions During Stage 4: Implement New Learning

Key Team Actions	Key Coach Actions
TLT Cycle Stage 4	TLT Cycle Stage 4
Teams use the <i>Stage 4 Protocol, Supporting and Monitoring Implementation of Team Learning</i>, to: • Finalize a plan for implementing units and strategies. • Track implementation and collect evidence of student learning. • Enlist job-embedded support. • Engage in the feedback process.	The PLI coach: • Facilitates TLT conversations to plan for implementation, ensuring focus on the Student, Team, and Teacher Learning Goals. • Works with school administrators on logistics if plans involve classroom visits or release time, and so forth. • May support tracking implementation (e.g., by observing in classrooms, noting trends and patterns for teams to address). • Helps the team navigate implementation challenges. • Complete and upload the <i>Stage 4 Protocol: Supporting and Monitoring Implementation of Team Learning</i>. Throughout the stage, the PLI coach works to: • Reinforce norms for collaboration. • Ensure equity of voice. • Model FFT Clusters language. • Track the team’s progress in the TLT Facilitation Log.
One-on-one coaching. Video reflection and practice sessions focus on teachers’ implementation of their learning in this stage.	

Additional Tools and Resources

See the PLI platform for the following additional tools and resources:

- Reflective Feedback Protocol (Tool 6.4) from *Becoming a Learning Team*. This tool supports the development of feedback skills, which is especially important when teams are observing each other’s instruction.

Stage 4: Implement New Learning Protocol

Stage 4 Protocol: Supporting and Monitoring Implementation of Team Learning	
Purpose	To elevate and monitor key moments in which specific strategies will be implemented. The protocol is used to both plan for and collect feedback that will support the team's learning plan.
Materials	Collaborative learning plan agenda (Stage 3), Curriculum Guides, Reflective feedback protocol (from <i>Becoming a Learning Team</i>)
Step 1: Plan for implementation.	
Guiding questions:	
- What new or refined skills, strategies, or practices are we implementing? - How will we document the implementation of these to share with our team? (Options: video record, peer observers with structured protocols, coach notes, student monitoring notes, student work)	
Team response:	
Step 2: Record evidence of student outcomes.	
What formative assessment evidence will we collect on students' learning around their progress toward goals? (Options: unit assessments, exit slips, mini whiteboard activity, short writing responses)	
Team response:	
Step 3: Check in on implementation.	
- What patterns in student responses or implementing successes/challenges are we noticing? - What does this tell us about our Student or Teacher Learning Goals? - What additional support might we need? - How does this inform our next steps?	
Team response:	

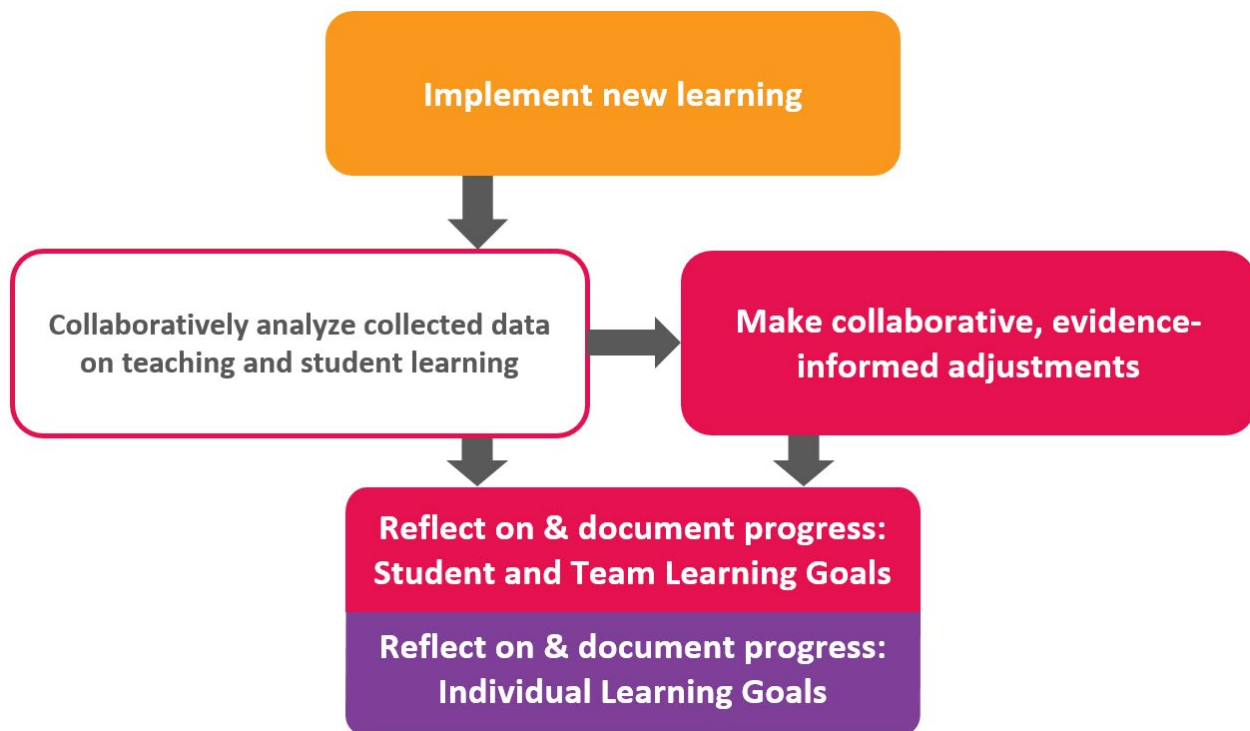
Stage 5: Monitor, Assess, and Adjust Practice

Purpose

The purpose of this final stage of the learning team cycle is for teachers to analyze, synthesize, and document their learning in their TLT. During this stage, teachers collaboratively analyze the evidence they have collected to understand implementation successes and ongoing challenges. Team members examine available formative and summative data to analyze the extent to which their students are progressing toward the goals they set in Stage 2.

Teams also reflect back on their Team Learning Goals to understand their accomplishments in making instructional improvements as well as to discuss whether the evidence indicates that the *likely* instructional root cause they identified in Stage 1 was actually among the real roots of the student learning challenge. They also use this time to articulate and record how their new or refined skills, strategies, or practices need further adjustment or improvement. Finally, they document what they learned and begin to discuss what steps to take in their next learning team cycle. Figure 15 depicts the relationships between the key components of Stage 5.

Figure 15. Stage 5 Component Map



See Chapter 8 for an illustrative example of Stage 5 processes. The Stage 5 protocol listing the steps that TLTs take in this stage is included later in this chapter and is available on the PLI platform.

Guiding Principles

As team members interpret the evidence to reflect on the connections between the changes they are making to their instruction and their students' progress, they should avoid arriving at quick conclusions. Instead, team members should thoroughly examine the data, question them carefully, and be open to changing their assumptions about those connections.

Depending on where the evidence leads them, teachers may become frustrated if they do not seem to be meeting the goals they set in Stage 2. And even if they exceed their goals beyond what they imagined they could attain at the start, teachers may realize there is more work to do. As Danielson (2016) writes, "Teaching is such challenging and complex work that it is impossible to do perfectly" (p. 69). This learning team cycle stage is an opportunity for teachers to support one another in making additional adjustments and refinements to their practice, document and celebrate their successes, and persist in exploring new questions and better solutions to instructional challenges.

Guiding Questions

Teachers will explore the following guiding questions in this stage:

- *What do assessment data tell us about outcomes related to the changes we're making?*
- *What have we learned about our students, our curriculum, our assessments, and our instruction in this cycle? What will we apply in the future?*
- *What support will we provide for the students who are still struggling with this set of goals?*
- *What might we do in the next cycle to ensure more students are successful?*

Key Actions for Stage 5: Monitor, Assess, and Adjust Practice

Figure 16 describes what teachers and coaches are accomplishing in Stage 5.

Figure 16. Key Team and Coach Actions During Stage 5

Key Team Actions	Key Coach Actions
TLT Cycle Stage 5 Teams discuss the <i>Stage 5 Protocol, Assessing and Reflecting for Impact and Improvement</i> , as they: • Examine the formative and summative data they collected in Stage 4. • Monitor progress toward goals. • Summarize the evidence and reflect on outcomes. • Document adjustments they make to their implementation.	TLT Cycle Stage 5 The PLI coach leads the team through a collaborative data interpretation session to help monitor progress on their Student and Teacher Learning Goals and make decisions about next steps. The coach does this by: • Collecting and organizing relevant data from classroom observations and assessments. • Sharing data analysis tools. • Helping interpret and summarize the data. • Helping identify patterns and trends across classrooms and surface those during team discussions. Complete and upload the Stage 5 Protocol: Assessing and Reflecting for Impact and Improvement. Throughout the stage, the PLI coach works to: • Reinforce norms for collaboration. • Ensure equity of voice. • Model FFT Clusters language. • Celebrate learning. • Track the team’s progress in the TLT Facilitation Log.
One-on-one coaching: During this stage, the teachers are finishing up their video reflections with practice sessions and engaging in reflective conversations with their coach. Coaches are updating the One-on-One Coaching Logs.	

Additional Tools and Resources

See the PLI platform for the following additional tools and resources:

- Protocols to support collaborative interpretation of student learning data

Stage 5: Monitor, Assess, and Adjust Protocol

Stage 5 Protocol: Assessing and Reflecting for Impact and Improvement	
Purpose	To guide the collection of formative and summative data points and team reflections and to identify what changes the team and individuals might make in the future.
Materials	Student and Teacher Learning Goals, assessment artifacts
Step 1: Reflect on and document progress toward the Student Learning Goal.	
Collect formative and summative assessment data: What evidence of student learning did we collect?	
Team response:	
Analyze data and reflect on outcomes: What are the data telling us about student learning?	
Team response:	
Monitor progress toward goals: To what extent are we meeting our Student Learning Goal?	
Team response:	
Determine next actions: What are we going to do now that we know that?	
Team response:	
Step 2: Reflect on and document progress toward the Team Learning Goal.	
Analyze data and reflect on outcomes: What are the data telling us about our teaching practices?	
Team response:	
Monitor progress toward goals: How well did we meet our Team Learning Goal?	
Team response:	
Determine next actions: What are we going to do now that we know that?	
Team response:	

Notes

Chapter 6: PLI Coaching Rounds

Introduction

The purpose of the coaching round is for each teacher to embed new skills into their teaching, through practice and reflection, with support from the PLI coach. The coaching round runs in parallel with the TLT cycle and focuses on the student learning challenge identified at the beginning of the cycle.

The coaching round begins partway into the second stage of the TLT Cycle (Stage 2: Set goals). After the team defines its Team Learning Goal, the teacher and coach collaborate one-on-one to define an Individual Teacher Learning Goal. To complete the Individual Teacher Goal, the teacher identifies the challenges of student performance in the Student Learning Goal, and the Teacher Goal is written to learn how to apply or improve instructional strategies that will positively influence the students' performance to overcome the challenge. That goal provides the focus for the coaching round, which continues to parallel the learning team cycle through Stage 5, as shown in Figure 1, Chapter 1.

A coaching round consists of three main parts:

1. Planning conversation
2. Video reflections and debriefs with practice
3. Reflective conversation

This chapter explains each part in turn.

Guiding Principles of a Coaching Round in PLI

The following principles should guide your work in coaching rounds:

- For the teacher and coach, the coaching round is an additional way to cultivate a productive, professional relationship.
- All conversations in coaching rounds are confidential. For example, any video records of practice are never to be shared with anyone without the individual teacher's permission.
- The FFT Clusters are the anchor text for all conversations in the coaching rounds.
- Knowing teachers as learners is critical. The PLI coach needs to demonstrate flexibility and sensitivity to the teachers' experience and background, adjusting the coaching to meet teachers where they are.

Coaching Rounds Part 1: The Planning Conversation

Goal of the Planning Conversation

The goal of the planning conversation is to arrange for the learning that will unfold in the coaching round. To do so, the teacher and coach first set an Individual Teacher Learning Goal that is explicitly related to the student learning challenge and Team Learning Goal identified in the TLT. The teacher and coach then collaborate to create the plan for the rest of the coaching round, specifying the following:

- The instructional skills the teacher wants to focus on, using the features of the FFT Clusters
- The length and content of the classroom video the teacher will collect and any other necessary artifacts (such as student work)
- The timeline or schedule for uploading the videos and preparing for and holding a debrief conversation

Prior to the conversation, the teacher will review the three guiding questions (Figure 17), which will focus the conversation and leverage an FFT Cluster that focuses on the instructional practices that will positively influence the student learning challenge.

Figure 17. Guiding Questions for the Planning Conversation

- *As we begin to plan our coaching round, how might the FFT Clusters narrative and focus areas inform your implementation of the new instructional strategy?*
- *What might be some continuum-of-practice descriptors that will be integrated into your practice?*
- *Which evidence will guide your analysis of the impact of the new instructional strategy on the student learning challenge?*

Approach to the Planning Conversation

The recommended structure for the planning conversation mirrors good lesson design: (1) an opening to focus on Student and Teacher Learning Goals and support emotional readiness, (2) a deep exploration of the FFT Clusters, and (3) a discussion of next steps and possible new insights. Document in the PLI platform.

The coach will adapt this structure to work with his or her own style and the teacher's needs. In doing so, the coach will draw on the conversation skills described in Chapter 3.

Coaching Rounds Part 2: Iterative Video Reflections With Practice

Video reflections with practice constitute the main source of learning in the coaching round. The teacher follows through on the planned activities, leveraging the Clusters and the expertise of the coach.

During Part 2, the teacher and coach engage in two or three iterations of a systematic, five-step process. The teacher records his or her instruction as planned and uploads it at each iteration.

The following sections describe the video reflection with practice steps and the purpose for each. For more detailed instructions on how to complete each step in the PLI platform, see the Whetstone user guide.

Step 1: The teacher records and selects segments of classroom instruction to discuss.

The video is evidence of practice on the instructional strategy or strategies the teacher chose to implement to solve the student learning challenge.

The teacher records a period of instruction 15–30 minutes long using a recording device and uploads the video to the PLI platform. See Whetstone user guide for the steps in this process.

The optimal video provides a genuine representation of authentic teaching, not a video of rehearsed teaching or an exemplar of flawless teaching. A video recording of authentic teaching will facilitate meaningful outcomes.

Then, the teacher scans the video and selects one or two segments of instruction, each 1–5 minutes long. The segment(s) should be instances of instruction the teacher wants the coach to review closely relative to the teacher’s Individual Teacher Learning Goal.

The teacher marks these segment(s) directly in the platform by making timestamped comments. For each segment, the teacher adds a comment to explain why it is important for the coach to review that segment closely. The teacher uses language from the Cluster, which is easy to access in the online tool

For example, at minute 7:10, a teacher (A) might write:

7:10—“Please start watching here because this is when I started to encourage my students to ‘persevere through challenges in their quest for mastery. My plan was to engage the students in the materials; however I decided to explain to them more explicitly what I meant by ‘doing their best work to complete the assignment,’ before letting them go. I shared with the students why being writers in math was applicable to them.”

11:15—“End of segment, please stop reviewing here.”

Or, a teacher (B) might write ...

3:15—“This is where I begin having my students take ownership of their work by stating a clear and ambitious outcome with intellectual challenge in the literacy activity. By scaffolding the procedures for the activity, I have the students do the thinking in each step and what it is asking them to do. My goal is to have students use academic vocabulary in their conversations and work, so they need to learn to say these words accurately in conversation by reading them in the activity. I noticed I had less students asking me ‘what does this mean?’ and the students who needed me to define words were specific students.”

5:45—“End of segment, please stop reviewing here.”

The purpose of the step is for the teacher to engage in deep reflective practice about her or his instruction. By reviewing the video, the teacher will be able to recall what she or he was thinking at the time of the selected segment and will be able to articulate what her or his instructional practice accomplished and to observe how it impacted student learning.

The coach responds to the teacher’s comments, acknowledging how the teacher planned on shifting his or her practice so that the instruction positively influenced the student learning challenge. The coach needs to know how to continually shape the teacher’s practice through his or her strengths so that the teacher remains committed to augmenting instruction that is focused on achieving the Student Learning Goal.

The deep reflection by the teachers will be guided by the coach during the debrief conversation.

A coach might write a response to teacher (A):

“I noticed the explanation you provided the students, ‘In life, we do math through story problems...’. How might real-world story problems build up their understanding of writing like a mathematician? As you indicated in your individual goal, because students writing in math is not as common as in other content areas, instruction has to be explicit.”

A coach might write a response to teacher (B):

“The emphasis on having students be able to read academic vocabulary in the directions and procedures to improve their comprehension is an effective strategy that demonstrates your high expectations for learning. In your Individual Teacher Learning Goal, you planned on using academic vocabulary in every aspect of their learning you could find. I know you were hesitant to use academic vocabulary in directions because you were worried it would interrupt the flow of your lesson. As this lesson progressed, did you find this strategy slowed the lesson down

and, if so, how; or if not, what benefits did you discover toward the students gaining more comprehension of academic vocabulary?”

Step 2: The coach views the video, focusing on selected segments and asking reflection questions.

The coach views the full video, focusing on the segments flagged by the teacher and making notes on strengths related to the FFT Cluster chosen by the teacher. The coach’s notes are not evaluative—it is not the role of the coach to point out weaknesses. Research indicates that “focusing people on their shortcomings doesn’t enable learning; it impairs it. [And] getting attention to our strengths from others catalyzes learning. . . .” (Buckingham & Goodall, 2019).

For each segment, the coach writes one or two carefully crafted questions for the teacher to reflect on prior to the debrief conversation. These questions can be adapted from the FFT Clusters considerations or from the guiding questions in this chapter. The coach writes the questions on the PLI platform and lets the teacher know the reflection questions are ready.

Step 3: The teacher reads the questions, watches the video segments again, and responds in writing to the questions.

This step is an option for teachers to have opportunities to privately reflect on practice before debriefing with their coaches. The responses do not need to be long or detailed but should show that the teachers are reflecting on their instruction using phrases from the FFT Clusters, both orally and in writing.

Step 4: Conduct a debrief coaching conversation.

The coach and teacher will use three guiding video reflection questions (see Figure 18) to structure their collaborative analysis and debrief of the recorded instruction. They also will discuss how students seem to be responding to that instruction in terms of their learning.

Figure 18. Guiding Video Reflection Questions for Debrief Conversation

- *In what ways did the instructional strategy contribute to student learning?*
- *In the planning conversation, we discussed some features of the FFT Clusters. In what ways did these features guide your implementation?*
- *As you continue to build your students’ skills and implement your new learning, what might be some refinements or next steps for the next practice period?*

The PLI coach will prepare for and structure the debrief coaching conversation so that the teacher can concentrate on the cognitive work of learning. To prepare, the PLI coach reviews the teacher's Individual Teacher Learning Goal; the products of Steps 1, 2, and 3; and the relevant FFT Clusters features.

The coach-teacher conversation centers on the guiding questions but does not follow a script. During the conversation, the coach actively listens and applies coaching conversation skills (Chapter 3). The PLI coach and the teacher will have an open dialogue. The goal of the debrief coaching conversation is to discuss one another's reflections on the selected video segments; that is, the debrief coaching conversation is a reciprocal activity.

Near the end of the conversation, the PLI coach and the teacher discuss how to follow through with additional practice (Step 5) and iteration(s) of video reflections with practice. To help the teacher maintain momentum, the PLI coach will summarize what was learned in the PLI platform.

Step 5: Support practice.

The purpose of practice is to keep the teacher engaged in the coaching process and thinking about practice so that the learning achieved during coaching rounds is not a "one-and-done" activity to simply get through. Rather, it is a process of continuous learning and reflecting.

During the time to "practice," the teacher chooses how to build his or her capacity to implement the focal instructional strategy with support from the PLI coach. The teacher then has time to strengthen and follow through on what was learned by reflecting in the debrief.

The PLI coach may check in with the teacher, particularly if there is a long period of time between contacts or videotaping. The value of video reflection with practice is that the teacher's learning remains active at all stages of the coaching round.

Throughout this process, the PLI coach logs teachers' Individual Teacher Learning Goals and learning process in a One-on-One Coaching Log for each teacher. These logs will be housed in the Whetstone platform.

Coaching Rounds Part 3: The Reflective Conversation

"Teaching is a thinking person's job; it is not simply a matter of following a script or carrying out other people's instructional designs." — Charlotte Danielson

Reflective Conversation Goals

After the iterations of video reflections with debrief coaching conversations, the coaching round concludes with a reflective conversation. The teacher and coach continue to use the FFT Clusters features. This is not considered the end of coaching but, rather, a conversation to synthesize the learning and celebrations of the coaching round process. The dialogue is reflective and highlights strengths and successes.

The objectives of the reflective conversation are as follows:

- Reflect on the coaching round to discuss achievements of the teacher's Individual Learning Goal and reflect on how the team learning contributed to that goal.
- Construct and synthesize new understandings of instructional skills through the FFT Clusters that will inform future practice.
- Discuss next steps, including how to share new understandings with the TLTs.

In the last coaching round of the school year, the PLI coach and teacher will discuss individual learning through the FFT Clusters self-assessment, from the beginning to the end of the school year.

Reflective Conversation Approaches

This conversation should be planned to prompt thinking about the teacher's Individual Teacher Learning Goal and how it contributed to the teacher's learning, the team learning, and the Team Learning Goal during the coaching round and the 12-week TLT cycle. The PLI coach should continue to use the communication skills listed in Chapter 3 to support the teacher's achievements with the Individual Teacher Learning Goal as well as the learning from the Team Learning Goal.

The conversation uses four guiding reflective questions (Figure 19), which the teacher and coach review before the meeting.

Figure 19. Guiding Questions for the Reflective Conversation

- *During the practice periods, what are some ways the refinements contributed to student learning?*
- *Considering the FFT Clusters in this coaching round, what are some key learnings?*
- *What might be some examples of how these will be integrated into your future instructional practices?*
- *In what ways has this coaching process impacted your thinking and professional growth?*

As with the planning conversation, the coach will draw on the conversation skills described in Chapter 3 and will adapt the recommended structure for the planning conversation, which includes (1) an opening to focus on Student and Teacher Learning Goals and to support emotional readiness, (2) a deep exploration of the FFT Clusters with the features for learning related to the teaching and learning, and (3) a discussion of next steps and possible new insights.

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Chapter 7: Reflections on Team, Teacher, and Coach Learning

Teaching and instructional coaching often require us to think and process information at a quick pace, sometimes making decisions in split seconds. One positive aspect of PLI is its focus on reflection, a specific type of thinking that enables us to make more informed decisions in the future.

Reflection requires an intentional effort. The tools in this chapter are intended to provide structured opportunities for further reflection that support more informed decision making. These tools support the following:

- Team reflection on the learning team cycle
- Individual teacher reflection on teaching skills
- Coach reflection on coaching practice in PLI

These tools and their use are described in the remainder of this chapter.

TLT Cycle Protocol: Reflecting on Team Learning

It is important for teachers and coaches to keep in mind that reflecting on the team's collaborative efforts and how the team moved through the cycle is just as important as reflecting on the goals before starting a new cycle. Coaches can use the TLT Cycle Reflection Protocol to facilitate collaborative reflection on the process and synthesize their learning. The coach or a designated note taker can summarize the team's conversation on the protocol and archive it on the PLI platform so that it can be reviewed in the future.

TLT Cycle Reflection Protocol	
Purpose	To guide the team in considering its successes and areas for refinement in each of the five stages of the learning team cycle. (This is an adaptation of Tool 7.5 in <i>Becoming a Learning Team</i> .)
Materials	Student learning data, agendas from team meetings, completed protocols from Stages 1–5
Reflections on Stage 1: Analyze data.	
Guiding questions:	
• How successful was our learning team in analyzing and discussing student needs? • What barriers, if any, did our team encounter when we tried to access data for analyzing student needs? • What do we think needs to happen to help our learning team successfully analyze data and identify student needs?	
Team response:	
Reflections on Stage 2: Set goals.	
Guiding questions:	
• How successful was our learning team in setting Student Learning Goals and using the FFT Clusters to identify complementary goals focused on teacher learning? • Were these the appropriate goals? How do we know? • Based on the evidence we collected, what adjustments, if any, would we make to our goals?	
Team response:	
Reflections on Stage 3: Learn individually and collaboratively.	
Guiding questions:	
• How successful was our team in researching and studying successful strategies for addressing student needs and discussing applications of what we studied? In learning from the FFT Clusters? In sharing successful strategies that different members currently use? • How successful was our learning team in identifying relevant and useful professional learning opportunities and strategies to help us achieve our goals? • Based on the evidence we collected, how successful was our team in designing new lessons and assessments for students? • What learning targets and strategies, if any, would we consider for next time?	

Team response:
Reflections on Stage 4: Implement new learning.
Guiding questions: • How successful was our learning team in trying out new techniques, materials, and approaches in teaching and assessing students? • What additional support might have been valuable?
Team response:
Reflections on Stage 5: Monitor, assess, and adjust practice.
Guiding questions: • How close did our students come to meeting our intended outcomes? How could we have gotten the students closer? • To what extent do our findings indicate that the likely instructional root cause we identified in Stage 1 was at the heart of the student learning challenge? • How will we serve any students who need additional support? • How do we want to apply what we hope to learn in our next cycle?
Team response:

Reflecting on Individual Teacher Learning

Throughout PLI, teachers engage in deep conversations about teaching and learning with their colleagues and coaches using the FFT Clusters. To understand how their teaching has progressed along a continuum of practice, they revisit their FFT Clusters self-assessment at the end of each year in PLI. This offers another opportunity to analyze their own practice as their knowledge of the Clusters and their skills grow. Teachers record their results so they can reflect on them later and share them with others if they wish.

Reflecting on Coach Learning

To build and nurture a mind-set of growth in teachers, PLI coaches should model and practice reflection regularly. The value of self-reflection and seeking feedback as a coach promotes growth and provides opportunities for coaches to ensure that the strategies and approaches being applied in TLTs and one-on-one coaching are progressing in the direction of the PLI goals. When reflection is processed frequently, coaches can adapt to the changing events of the

teaching and the teachers they serve, and they can feel successful about the work of coaching by engaging in metacognition. Much of what coaches learn is from experience, and as they gain more experiences, along with intentional reflection and growth, their expertise in applying coaching skills advances. It is not uncommon for coaches to feel isolation for many reasons, so it is critical for them to have their own coaches, who are confidants. In PLI, the program has experienced lead coaches with expertise in facilitation and coaching to build and nurture the PLI coaches through the Danielson Group and Learning Forward program specialists.

In PLI, the PLI coach leads team and individual development so that learning is purposeful and focused on solving student learning challenges. For the PLI coach to be a leader in this educative approach, the following standards from Cluster 6, Professionalism, should guide coaches' work:

- Continuous professional learning and improvement are valued and consistently demonstrated by the PLI coach through an inquiry-based, growth-focused, and results-oriented approach to professional engagement.
- Collaboration with colleagues and PLI program specialists occurs frequently, involves active engagement, and is characterized by commitment and trust.
- Honesty and integrity are consistently evident in the PLI coach's work and interactions with the team and individuals.

PLI coaches work with their program specialists to use a PLI coach reflection tool to self-assess their progress in coaching and to guide their work with teachers and teams. Coaches also keep logs of their TLT and coaching. These logs will be housed in the Whetstone platform. Reviewing these documents periodically also will aid in careful reflection on practice. With guidance from program specialists from the Danielson Group and Learning Forward, coaches also may be encouraged to collect video records of their coaching conversations with teachers, evidence of changes in teaching practice, and other artifacts to aid in reflection on their coaching.

Notes

Chapter 8: An Illustrative Example

Team Narrative

There are many ways that teams might engage in this process to identify student learning challenges and likely instructional root causes. The following narrative example is presented here to illustrate one way a team might move through a TLT Cycle. A parallel coaching-round example follows.

Example TLT Stage 1 Narrative

Background

The Oakleaf Elementary School Teacher Learning Team consists of four fourth-grade teachers. They are entering into a 12-week TLT Cycle to prepare for an upcoming English language arts (ELA) unit, *Perspectives on the American Revolution: Perspectives in Literature*, from the district's curriculum module, [The American Revolution](#).

Identifying and Collecting Essential Information on Student Learning

Having decided to focus on ELA based on school goals and the team's professional judgment, the PLI coach and team members have gathered and brought the following data sources to review during their TLT meeting:

- Classroom assessments containing students' written responses to a variety of prompts from the last ELA unit
- State standardized testing data from the fourth graders team members taught the previous school year
- Observational records the team collected during its one-on-one student reading conferences conducted earlier in the fall

Analyzing Student Learning Data

The team decides to first examine the standardized testing data reflecting ELA proficiency levels from the previous school year's entire grade level. The PLI coach walks the team through a collaborative interpretation process that enables the teachers to make note of trends across the fourth grade.

Teachers then examine their classroom assessments from the current school year to look for patterns across the two data sets. They notice a few places where the data suggest an ongoing challenge. Both data sets indicate that a majority of their fourth graders struggle to name and describe specific character actions, infer what caused the character to act in a particular way, and then describe the consequences of that action relative to the story. Two teachers on the team note further that their observations from conferences also point to this student learning challenge.

Writing Student Learning Data Summary Statements

To focus their thinking, they craft the following data summary statement, linking the challenge to specific student learning standards:

- *“The majority of our fourth-grade readers do not refer to appropriate details and examples from the text to explain what the text says explicitly (for example, when describing characters) and when drawing inferences from the text (for example, when inferring causes for characters’ choices or actions).” (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1)*

This summary statement seems to capture an evidence-based **student learning challenge** that is important to address in their work together in this learning team cycle.

The PLI coach notes this on the *Stage 1 Protocol* and reminds the team of the next Stage 1 steps.

Identifying Likely Instructional Root Causes

To surface aspects of instruction that may be contributing to (or at least failing to fully address) the student learning challenge, the team begins by individually reviewing their FFT Clusters continuum of practice and shares one or two Clusters they would like to explore with the team.

A few teachers on the team share the FFT Clusters about which they would like to learn more. The link between the student learning challenge and likely instructional contributors to that challenge, however, is not obvious. After some discussion, one team member suggests the students struggle to make accurate inferences because the texts used are not engaging and do not represent the cultural backgrounds of their students, which might have led to some students being unable to see the material as relevant and exciting. Another teacher hypothesizes that perhaps the students are not provided enough opportunities to practice using details from the text to explain their thinking about the characters in the stories and to get feedback on their thinking and the inferences they do make. They discuss what evidence exists to support either of those hypotheses.

The PLI coach guides the team to review the FFT Cluster 4, Intellectual Engagement, and Cluster 5, Successful Learning, narratives in the FFT Clusters document, highlighting statements that seem to connect to the student learning challenge.

The team finds the following statements to resonate with them in relationship to inferencing:

Cluster 4: “When a teacher is building on student responses to questions (whether posed by the teacher or by other students), students are challenged to explain their thinking, to critique the reasoning of others, and to cite specific evidence to back up a position.”

Cluster 5: “Another important mechanism to ensure students’ success is arranging for them to receive specific and timely feedback on their efforts. The teacher can provide this feedback, of course. But it can also be supplied by other students (as when they challenge—respectfully—the thinking of their classmates) or by the instructional activities themselves.”

The coach encourages the team to narrow their attention to the one Cluster that seems most relevant to the student learning challenge by reading the focus areas for each FFT Cluster so that they can determine their learning goals in the next stage.

Summarizing Instructional Root Causes

The team comes to consensus on the following FFT Cluster 4 focus area as a statement of the team's **likely instructional root cause** for the identified student learning challenge:

Our fourth graders don't have enough scaffolded opportunities to engage in student discourse that demonstrates higher order thinking, reasoning skills, and the ability to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with others' thinking and ideas.

Documenting Learning

With the coach's support, the team summarized their conclusions using the *Stage 1 Protocol, Identifying Student Learning Challenges and Instructional Root Causes*, and the coach uploads it to the PLI platform.

Example TLT Stage 2 Narrative**Background**

The last time the Oakleaf team met, its members analyzed data and prioritized a student learning challenge related to the students' struggle to make text-based inferences about the causes of characters' actions. They also identified a potential instructional root cause related to the need for teachers to support productive student discourse. Now, the team will set both Student and Team Learning Goals based on these conversations.

Reviewing Curriculum Materials

The team begins by reviewing the *Stage 2 Protocol*, and members turn to their upcoming curriculum module materials on the *Perspectives on the American Revolution* to find opportunities within the unit they can use to address the student learning challenge they identified in Stage 1. The team pulls out several student learning targets embedded in the unit that seem to be related to the challenge, including the following:

- Analyze for characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- Write character analysis paragraphs.

Team members believe they can address their likely instructional root cause by helping students meet these particular curriculum-focused targets.

Crafting a Student Learning Goal

Next, the team begins to collaboratively craft its goal for student learning in this cycle. Team members discuss what they want students to be able to do at the end of the unit. They review their data summary statement and ask themselves, "If this is the current state, what is the desired state of student learning?"

To further refine team members' ideas, the coach helps facilitate their discussion and prompts them to use the SMART framework, attending to the five SMART goal components.

After thinking through each of the components, the team drafts the following Student Learning Goal:

“By the end of the 8-week unit, our students will be able to draw appropriate inferences about character motivation over the course of a story arc and support those inferences with specific details from the text in a written format as measured by the end-of-unit assessment.”

Crafting a Team Learning Goal

With the Student Learning Goal and instructional root causes in mind, team members turn to crafting their Team Learning Goal, which will be the basis for their individual and collaborative learning in the next stage. The Team Learning Goal describes what the teachers need to learn so they can ensure their students meet their goal.

The coach facilitates a review of the continuum-of-practice descriptors for FFT Cluster 4, Intellectual Engagement, and especially the teaching skills that support student discourse.

The teachers focus on two particular continuum-of-practice descriptors to describe the skills they wish to develop this cycle:

Team Learning Goal

If the team creates lessons to engage students in rich learning tasks, then our students will be able to draw appropriate inferences about character motivation over the course of a story arc and support those inferences with specific details from the text in a written format.

Once team members have achieved clarity on their learning focus, the coach begins to meet individually with teachers to engage in the coaching round planning conversations, during which teachers draft Individual Teacher Learning Goals to ensure that, while the team is working together to accomplish collective goals, teachers’ learning can be differentiated according to their experiences, needs, and aspirations.

Documenting Team Learning

With the coach’s support, team members summarize their conclusions using the *Stage 2 Protocol, Writing Team Learning and Student Learning Goals*, and the coach uploads it to the PLI platform.

Example TLT Stage 3 Narrative

Background

The team has 6 weeks before the *Perspectives on the American Revolution: Perspectives in Literature* curriculum unit begins. When they met last, the team members agreed to bring any resources they could find on student discourse to the next TLT meeting.

Team members brought four articles on student discourse, including peer feedback, to the meeting. One team member located four short YouTube videos for the team to study together. The PLI coach also invited the district elementary literacy coordinator, who had a wealth of knowledge and experience in managing peer feedback. One teacher identified a webinar that looked relevant.

Planning for Learning

The team reviews the *Stage 3 Protocol* and decides to split up the review of the resources in a jigsaw activity, with each teacher taking responsibility for reporting back to the team what he or she learned from the resource. The remainder of the meeting was spent digging into the curriculum materials.

The teachers noted that in the third week of the American Revolution unit, making inferences using examples from the text will be a key focus. Prior to that, students will be working on reading text closely, understanding the main idea and overall structure of the text to develop multiple perspectives about the same event—in this case, the American Revolution.

With help from the coach, the teachers begin to discuss how they will embed opportunities for student discourse into the scope and sequence of the curriculum so that they can practice the skills and strategies they are learning in this stage. The district elementary literacy coordinator lends her insight to this discussion as well.

The team members agree that they do not want to change their current plans for student discourse until after they have had a chance to study the learning resources they gathered. They spent the week after the meeting learning more about different ways to structure student discourse and peer feedback.

Reviewing goal through the lens of KASAB:

The KASAB framework provided in the Stage 2 Protocol helps the team structure its conversation and articulate members' professional learning needs related to their Team Learning Goal statement.

One team member creates a KASAB chart on his laptop and projects it on a wall. He begins filling it in as the team discusses each part of the KASAB framework.

The coach makes a strategic decision to focus the team first on the "S" of the KASAB framework—Skills. The coach facilitates a review of the continuum-of-practice descriptors for FFT Cluster 4, Intellectual Engagement, and especially on the teaching skills that support student discourse.

The team concentrates on two particular continuum-of-practice descriptors to define the skills they wish to develop this cycle:

Skills—Teachers need to be able to design and implement learning tasks in which students are asked to explain their thinking, citing specific reasons (and most students do so) (Cluster 4: Proficient Descriptor) and in which students initiate higher order questions; they invite comments from their classmates during a discussion and push their classmates with extended questions in both small-group and whole-class contexts (Cluster 4: Distinguished Descriptor).

From there, the team is able to pinpoint the “K” of the KASAB framework—knowledge—that underpins those skills.

Knowledge—We need to learn about strategies and practice for student discourse so that students demonstrate higher-order thinking, reasoning skills, and the ability to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with others’ thinking and ideas to explain their inferences regarding characters’ actions using evidence from the text to their peers to accelerate learning.

As they consider the knowledge and skills they need, the teachers begin to explore what beliefs and attitudes—the first “A” of the KASAB framework—will support their instruction. Their coach offers the following questions for the team to ponder:

- What do we believe about students’ ability to engage in thoughtful, respectful, and productive student discourse?
- What are some of our beliefs about the connections between student discourse and their learning of the content?

The team members summarize their conclusions from this discussion in the following statement:

Attitudes—We need to be open to the idea that fourth graders may be capable of engaging in meaningful dialogue that extends one another’s learning.

As they consider the second “A,” aspirations, they take time to articulate some commitments to one another and their students.

Aspirations—We want to get better at this aspect of the FFT Cluster because we believe that students are capable of teaching each other in meaningful ways.

Finally, the teachers explore what specific team behaviors—the “B” of the KASAB framework—will have to shift so they can meet their Team Learning Goals.

Behaviors—We will need to change the way we share our teaching successes and failures so we can accelerate our own as well as one another’s learning.

Learning Together

As the teachers begin to discuss the learning resources, they notice several things. The YouTube videos of other teachers using various peer feedback structures helped clarify the need to model specific sentence stems for students when they first begin to critique their peers’ reasoning and offer feedback on the inferences that students make. They also note two practices from their webinar that other teachers have used that seem to support effective student discourse (although the webinar cited only two small research studies). They list three potential strategies to explore further:

- Giving students reminder cards with the sentence stems on them as a scaffold to support constructive discourse.
- Adding time at the end of the literacy block for students to reflect on and share the experience of getting feedback from their peers on their inferences and text-based evidence for those inferences.
- Pairing students and placing students with different strengths in terms of reading, writing, speaking, and listening together.

At their next team meeting, the teachers share what they are learning in their initial video reflections in their one-on-one coaching rounds. One teacher even volunteers to share a clip from her video showing how she modeled example sentence stems to her students.

Getting Ready to Implement New Learning

After discussing their initial learning, the teachers are ready to create a plan for what they will implement consistently across their team in the next TLT Cycle stage.

They start by collaborating to develop a set of reminder cards to use across classrooms. After reviewing the continuum-of-practice descriptors in the FFT Cluster, the teachers discuss a set of reflection questions they will use with their students at the end of the lesson (borrowing some of the language from the FFT Cluster to craft their questions) and their decisions about grouping for productive student discourse.

One teacher rehearses how he plans to launch the lesson with students, introducing the reminder cards and modeling their use. The other teachers take notes during his rehearsal, discuss their feedback, and start to think about what evidence they will collect from students to assess their learning and understanding.

Meanwhile, in coaching rounds, teachers work individually with their coaches to hone their individual learning plans and start their video reflections with practice sessions.

Documenting Team Learning

With the coach's support, the team summarizes its members' conclusions using the *Stage 3 Protocol, Developing and Scheduling Team Learning*. The coach uploads the team's conclusions to the PLI platform.

Example TLT Stage 4 Narrative

Background

Now that the team has engaged in individual and collaborative learning, its members are ready to implement what they have learned into their classrooms as they begin the *Perspectives on the American Revolution* unit, specifically in terms of the focus on using examples from the text to support their inferences. The team reviews the *Stage 4 Protocol* and creates a brief checklist of “teacher moves” that helps guide implementation of the peer feedback sentence stems and reflection time.

Planning for Implementation

They decide to take the next 2 weeks of the unit to implement the strategies and collect student work to explore how students responded to those strategies.

Meanwhile, in their coaching rounds, teachers make personalized plans to video record lessons that involve student discourse for additional support for implementation.

The team decides how members will document their implementation of the three strategies they learned about in Stage 3, as well as how they will assess their students’ skills so they can understand and share how well the strategies seem to be working (e.g., what they did, what went well, what did not seem to work well, and how they orchestrated student discourse). Two teachers decide to videotape themselves modeling the peer feedback sentence stems, and two decide to observe each other and script the lesson.

Recording Evidence of Student Outcomes

The teachers also identify the student work they want to bring back to the team to help its members assess their students’ learning.

Checking in on Implementation

Halfway through the implementation period, the team’s members meet to check in with each other on how well their implementation plan is playing out, and the coach leads a discussion to help the team determine how the strategies are working. Team members report that students’ conversations with one another were lively but did not always include text-based examples. In addition, they notice that the peer feedback strategy is challenging, so they decide to make a minor adjustment by showing a video they found of two students providing each other with feedback as a model for peer conversations. They also decide to revise the reminder cards, adding visuals to make them more accessible.

As they implemented the sentence stems with their students, the teachers also recognize a need for a short monitoring checklist of key words and phrases that will help them assess the rigor and quality of students’ conversations about their reading.

As the teachers apply and track these strategies, they find that certain texts lend themselves to deeper inferences from students, which make the peer feedback sessions more relevant. They make

note of these texts in their unit planner so they can apply those specific practices when they teach the unit.

At the next meeting, team members review what they learned from tracking the implementation of their strategies and collected student work. They are excited to see that as they model and then allow for peer feedback, their students are making more detailed references to texts in their current writing projects. This represents a shift because in past units, students struggled to apply the feedback they were given by their teachers.

During this stage, teachers prepare to implement the unit post-assessment and bring the resulting student work for analysis in the next stage of the learning team cycle.

Documenting Team Learning

With the coach's support, the teachers summarize their conclusions using the *Stage 4 Protocol, Supporting and Monitoring Implementation of Team Learning*. The coach uploads the team's summary to the PLI platform.

Example TLT Stage 5 Narrative

Background

Although the team's members have been monitoring their students' learning and making necessary adjustments throughout the cycle, they now come together to closely analyze the data they have collected and to determine how successful they have been in meeting their goals. The teachers revisit both their Student and Team Learning Goals by posting them on a chart so that members can easily refer to them.

Reflecting on and Documenting Progress Toward Student Learning Goals

The teachers start by entering into a data discussion facilitated by the coach using a data protocol to discuss the results of the unit post-assessment they have just administered. Each teacher brings his or her student work already evaluated against a rubric that was created at the beginning of the unit. The team used the language from its SMART goal to determine the criteria for student success on the assessment—that each student should be able to draw an inference about a character's motivations and support that inference with at least two pieces of evidence. The teachers find that 92% of their students meet this criterion.

They note that, even among the students who were not yet successful with this skill, all were able to make plausible inferences but were not able to find evidence to support them. The team notes that about half the students who have not met the goal are English language learners, and team members begin thinking about how they might adjust their instruction to better meet the language needs of their students.

Reflecting on and Documenting Progress on the Team Learning Goal

The teachers now look to assess how well they met their own learning goals. They review each part of their Team Learning Goal from Stage 2:

Team Learning Goal: *We will develop our understanding of different student discourse strategies and implement those new strategies to improve our students' ability to make appropriate text-based inferences by explaining their thinking, citing specific reasons. We will arrange learning tasks to ensure our students initiate higher-order questions, invite comments from their classmates during a discussion, and push their classmates with extended questions in both small-group and whole-class contexts by using examples from the text to support their explanations about the characters.*

Teachers start by sharing their observations on how students were engaging in lively discussions with meaningful give-and-take. They also share some of what they learned in their one-on-one coaching rounds, including evidence from their videos that students were citing examples from the text in their conversations.

The teachers also take a moment to reflect on the artifacts they collected on their instruction during the implementation phase.

The coach and teachers work together to select something from their artifacts to demonstrate growth in their Team Learning Goal. They review the FFT Cluster continuum-of-practice descriptors in light of this evidence, and as a team, they determine that they met most parts of their goal and feel especially successful with their command of the feedback models and their expectation of students to engage intellectually with one another. Team members reflect that students are now engaging in conversations about the reading at a much deeper level than before, as evidenced by the quality of their peer conversations using the monitoring checklist implemented in Stage 4. They realize, however, that they did not attend as intentionally to their text selection as they would have liked, especially in light of the needs of their students who are English language learners. The teachers decide to make this a specific focus of their next team learning cycle, particularly with respect to the FFT Cluster themes of equity, cultural competence, and attention to individual students.

Documenting Team Learning

With the coach's support, the team summarizes its members' conclusions using the *Stage 5 Protocol, Assessing and Reflecting for Impact and Improvement*. The coach uploads the team's summary to the PLI platform.

Coaching Round Narrative

There are many ways that teachers might engage in coaching rounds to accomplish their learning goals relative to the identified student learning challenges. The following narrative provides one concrete example of a coaching round.

Example Coaching Round

Part 1. Planning Conversation

Sofia Lerner, a member of the Oakleaf Elementary fourth-grade TLT, sits down with her PLI coach before lunch one day to develop an individual learning plan as a basis for their upcoming coaching round. They begin by reviewing the Student and Team Learning Goals identified in the second stage of the learning team cycle. The coach encourages Sofia to consider how the team's Student Learning Goal applies specifically to her students.

They then discuss the first two guiding questions for the planning conversations:

- As we begin to plan our coaching round, how might the FFT Cluster narrative and focus area inform your implementation of the new instructional strategy?
- What might be some descriptors that will be integrated into your practice?

Sofia admits that she struggles to keep students focused and on task when she tries to engage them with activities that involve explaining things to one another and critiquing one another's ideas. She also worries that students struggle so much with understanding what is explicit in the text—much less what must be inferred—that if she does not direct the conversations herself, the students will miss the point.

Nonetheless, Sofia wants to achieve the team's Student Learning Goal. She and the PLI coach review the FFT Clusters narrative, and the sentence "[T]eachers are especially adept at responding to and building on student responses" resonates with her. They also revisit her FFT Clusters self-reflection, and together they craft the following Individual Teacher Learning Goal derived from the Cluster 4 descriptor.

Individual Teacher Learning Goal: *My explanations of how to make inferences invite student intellectual engagement and time to share their thinking with others so that most of my students use appropriate details from the text (in their writing as well as in their conversations with one another).*

They discuss the different strategies that Sofia might employ to reach this goal as the coach uses the FFT Cluster 4 considerations questions to guide the conversation:

- In what ways do the instructional activities and questions explored promote intellectual engagement and energy in classrooms?
- In what ways are students asked to explain their thinking, construct arguments, and question the thinking of others?

Once they have some ideas, they set a time for Sofia to video-record her classroom as she attempts to implement one of the strategies they have discussed. The video recording is set for this Friday at 10:15 a.m.

Part 2. Video Reflections With Practice

Video Reflection With Practice 1

Sofia video-records her Friday lesson during which students finish reading the first act of the play *Divided Loyalties* from the *Perspectives on the American Revolution* curriculum module. In the video, Sofia can be seen asking students open-ended questions about why they think the characters are responding to the situation in the ways that are portrayed. She starts with a whole-class discussion that unpacks explicit details about the text and then has students work in pairs to discuss what they know about the different characters in the play.

Sofia then uploads the 28-minute video to the PLI platform and notes that the segment she wants the coach to focus on starts at about minute 6. She writes a brief note on why she wants her coach to review that segment.

The PLI coach then logs in and watches the video, concentrating on the flagged segment Sofia selected, and writes the following reflective question: “In thinking about how the open-ended questions you posed to students promoted intellectual engagement as the whole class unpacked the explicit details of the text, how did the student responses to the inquiries guide your instruction in this segment?”

To direct Sofia’s attention to a strength of her instruction, the coach also uses the FFT Cluster 4 descriptors to ask how the structure and timing of the pairs activity enabled students to share their thinking with others and promoted lively discussion during small-group work.

Sofia reflects on these questions and uploads her written response to the PLI platform. The coach reviews her answers as she prepares for the video reflection debrief conversation.

During the debrief, Sofia and the coach discuss the guiding debrief questions:

- In what ways did the instructional strategy contribute to student learning?
- In the planning conversation, we discussed some continuum-of-practice descriptors from the FFT Cluster. In what ways did these descriptors guide your implementation?
- As you continue to build your students’ skills (student learning challenge) and implement the new instructional strategy, what might be some refinements or next steps during the next practice period?

Throughout the discussion, the coach scaffolds the open-ended questions and asks follow-up questions as necessary. The coach and Sofia decide that during the subsequent practice period, Sofia will again have students work in pairs and will tweak her introduction to the activity to promote lively discussion focused on the text.

Video Reflection With Practice 2

For the second video reflection, Sofia records the lesson on which her team has collaborated to develop strategies. She plans to use the sentence stem reminder cards as prompts that require the students to make inferences from the text as they review one another's written responses.

After making the video and writing and responding to prompts, the coach and Sofia decide to debrief the video during their coaching round reflective conversation.

Part 3. Reflective Conversation

The FFT Cluster 4 anchors the reflective conversation. Sofia and the PLI coach share successes from the coaching round using the narrative highlights, focus areas, considerations, and continuum-of-practice descriptors.

The PLI coach plans for the reflective conversation by connecting the work Sofia has completed throughout the coaching round to the FFT Cluster features with the individual Teacher Learning Goal.

They discuss the Reflection Conversation guiding questions:

- During the practice periods, what are some ways the refinements contributed to student learning?
- Considering the FFT Cluster in this coaching round, what are some key learnings?
- What might be some examples of how these key learnings will be integrated into your future instructional practices?
- In what ways have your internal thought processes in teaching and learning shifted? How were you generalizing these thought processes in other areas of student discourse with the students? In what ways has this had an impact on student learning (in terms of making inferences)?

Sofia notes that she is more comfortable promoting student discourse in her classroom now that she knows how to set up the tasks she wants students to accomplish using the curriculum. She notices students citing more relevant examples in their writing tasks as well. Throughout the conversation, the coach remains in the moment, often restating the question or asking follow-up questions.

They end by discussing this guiding question:

- In what ways has this coaching process influenced your thinking and professional growth?

Among other reflections shared during the reflective conversation, Sofia mentions how the coaching round is helping her see the connections between her instructional strategies and practices and how her students respond and learn. The videos are especially helpful in that regard.

Documenting Learning

The PLI coach notes Sofia's progress in the PLI coach log and shares the completed log with her.

Notes

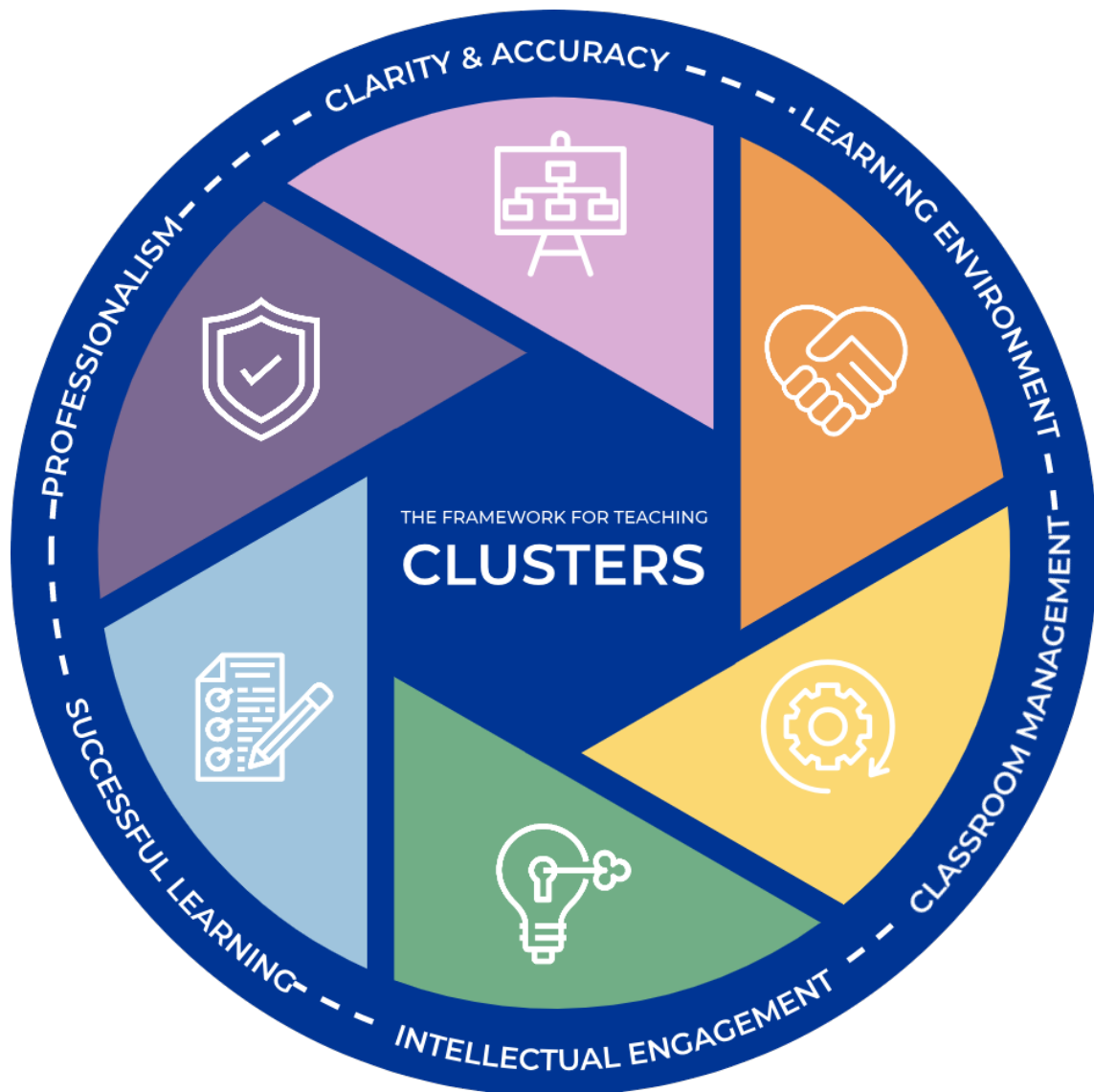
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Appendix A: Six Clusters to Support Teacher Growth and Student Learning



THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS





The Framework for Teaching Clusters, Version 2.3

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SIX CLUSTERS TO SUPPORT TEACHER GROWTH AND STUDENT LEARNING

The Framework for Teaching Clusters (FFT Clusters) describe skills demonstrated by accomplished teachers in promoting high levels of student learning— skills based on foundational knowledge and dispositions, grounded in a deep understanding of how people learn, and enacted through principled decision making.

The FFT Clusters are a companion tool designed to complement the Framework for Teaching (the Framework), originally developed in 1996. The Clusters distill "big ideas" of the Framework's four domains and 22 components into an efficient tool (composed of six large concepts). This multi-use tool can serve as the foundation for professional growth by teachers, both through their own reflection on practice and their conversations with colleagues, mentors and coaches, and supervisors.

An important source of power of both the original Framework and the FFT Clusters is their use of a common language of practice. This common language permits both the development of shared understandings and meaningful professional conversation. Assumptions about the nature of learning and a specific understanding of how to promote it are implicit in both the original Framework and the FFT Clusters. Namely, they promote a constructivist view of learning. It is the learner who does the learning, and it is the job of the teacher to arrange for that learning to occur.

Utilized together, these tools support various aspects of teacher growth, system-wide school improvement efforts, and coherent approaches to understanding teacher knowledge and skills across all stages of the career continuum. Like the original Framework, the FFT Clusters are "generic" in nature; they apply to all teaching situations, in all disciplines, and at different student





ages and levels. This feature promotes broad professional conversations and ensures that the tool is responsive to the needs of educators.

The FFT Clusters reflect teaching to high standards of student learning. Principles of teaching for engaged and important learning and whole-child development are, to some degree, generic. For instance, all teaching for deep conceptual understanding requires the use of precise academic language, the skills of argumentation, and perseverance with challenging content. In practice, of course, actual teaching occurs with students in all their diversity – cultural, linguistic, and developmental. Hence, accomplished teachers must be familiar with students' individual characteristics, mindsets, and needs and arrange for learning and growth accordingly. When the language of the FFT Clusters refers to attending to individual students, it is to this full range of learners that it applies. These principles are described in the Common Themes of the Framework, which permeate all its components and the FFT Clusters. These aspects of teaching are not discrete, observable practices but rather beliefs that are evident in how teachers engage in those practices. Understanding the Common Themes and their implications is essential to understanding the details provided within the Clusters.

When grounded in an understanding of how we learn and a commitment to excellence and equity, the six Clusters provide a roadmap for student learning through active, intellectual engagement, which has always been the heart of the Framework and is the ultimate goal of instruction.

If (1) Clarity of Instructional Purpose and Accuracy of Content, (2) A Safe, Respectful, Supportive, and Challenging Learning Environment, and (3) Classroom Management are in place, then the conditions exist for (4) Student Intellectual Engagement with important content to occur, which is necessary to reach the ultimate goal of (5) Successful Learning by All Students. Teaching rests on a foundation of (6) Professionalism and must be supported by teacher-centered professional learning systems and teacher-powered school improvement efforts that honor and reflect the needs of the whole teacher.

THE COMMON THEMES

Equity

Equity is the primary Common Theme and is supported by the others. Teachers strive for excellence, but "a commitment to excellence is not complete without a commitment to equity." Each student deserves access to world-class teaching and to learning environments that promote joyful inquiry, intellectual rigor, and reflection.

Cultural Competence

Culturally competent teachers create culturally responsive and inclusive learning environments that move beyond surface level attention to cultural differences and foster a sense of belonging by embracing and giving power to diverse points of view.

High Expectations

Excellent teachers hold and communicate high expectations and ensure access to rigorous content for all students. Teachers also demonstrate high expectations by encouraging productive struggle and tenacity.

Developmental Appropriateness

Learners do the learning and excellent teachers understand the cognitive and social-emotional development of students in ways that support their creation of appropriate learning environments and opportunities.

Attention to Individual Students

Classrooms are comprised of individuals with unique characteristics and needs. For this reason, excellent teachers ensure that goals and tasks have the potential to challenge students at different levels and with different needs.

Student Assumption of Responsibility

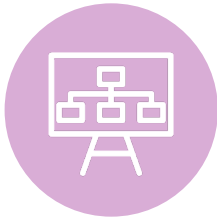
Excellent teachers create the conditions for students to assume responsibility for their own learning. Student agency may be fostered through a variety of different school models and instructional approaches but is essential to successful teaching and learning.

THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

Each cluster includes three focus areas to support professional growth and deepen understanding. In addition, indicators and considerations prompt reflection, analysis, and goal setting. Rubrics provide a more detailed description of practices that might be cultivated. Together, these elements provide a high-level and practical overview of the big ideas represented by each Cluster.

Further understanding can be achieved through exploration of components from the original Framework related to each Cluster (see Appendix A for a complete alignment of components and elements to the Clusters). The indicators for the Clusters include parenthetical reference to the FFT components. Educators can refer to the Framework for further descriptions and rubrics for these components.

The FFT Clusters promote teaching to high standards of student learning reflected in high-level, college- and career-readiness standards. By focusing on the FFT Clusters, teachers, teacher leaders, and those who support their learning can promote a growth mindset while engaging in professional conversations around these six major areas of instructional practice. Use of the Framework Clusters can transform casual or formal conversations about teaching practice into opportunities for authentic and purposeful dialogue to enhance student learning.



CLARITY & ACCURACY

Focus Areas:

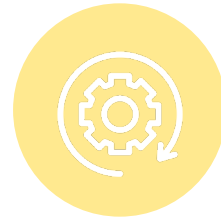
- Learning outcomes
- Instructional decision-making
- Content expertise



LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Focus Areas:

- Positive developmental relationships
- Intellectual challenge
- Support & Persistence



CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Focus Areas:

- Routines & procedures
- Collective responsibility
- Physical environment



INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Focus Areas:

- Lesson structure & flow
- Rich learning tasks
- Student collaboration & discourse



SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

Focus Areas:

- Equitable access
- Assessment & feedback
- Shared accountability



PROFESSIONALISM

Focus Areas:

- Continuous learning
- Collaboration
- Principled decision-making



CLUSTER 1 CLARITY & ACCURACY

Clarity of Instructional Purpose and Accuracy of Content

Teaching is a purposeful activity; it is goal-directed and designed to achieve particular, well-defined ends. Even when high-quality instructional materials are available, teachers must determine the purposes for a given class on a given day. In all disciplines, daily purposes are embedded in larger goals that develop over time. That is, important understanding of complex concepts (such as the distinction between democratic and republican forms of government, or the behavior of prime numbers) and the skills of constructing paths of reasoning, do not lend themselves to a single day's lesson, and are not "checked off" as complete. They develop slowly, with the purpose for a given day anchoring a longer sequence of lessons. In fact, the very phrase "habits of mind" suggests that it takes time to develop such understanding and skill, and increased sophistication in content. Therefore, although it is essential for teachers to demonstrate clarity of instructional purpose, those purposes may not be able to be considered "finished."

Clarity of instructional purpose is essential to good teaching; classroom time is, after all, limited, and available time must be used wisely. Instructional purposes are statements not of what the students will do, but of what the teacher intends for students to learn; they should be clear and appropriately challenging for the students in the class. It is not sufficient for a teacher to state what the students will do during a lesson; they should also be clear about what the students will learn. Although students learn through tasks and investigations, and reflection on those activities, the tasks must be designed to serve the teacher's instructional purpose and be suitable to the students in the class.

FOCUS AREAS Successful teachers focus on...

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are clear and ambitious, reflect important content knowledge, and address the social, emotional, and intellectual development of students.

INSTRUCTIONAL DECISION- MAKING

Instructional decision-making is guided by the instructional purpose and focused on student engagement in the intellectual work of learning.

CONTENT EXPERTISE

Content expertise is evident in the teacher's presentations, explanations, and responses to students.

Components for Success:

1a Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

1b Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

1c Setting Instructional Outcomes

1e Designing Coherent Instruction

1a Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

1b Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

1d Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

1f Designing Student Assessments

3a Communicating with Students

1a Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Clarity of purpose implies alignment with 1) high-level standards and curriculum outcomes, including factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge, skills, and understandings and 2) strategies and processes relating to and underlying these skills and understandings. The content should be challenging and rigorous, and appropriate for students in the class; this suggests that learning outcomes may be individualized, to some degree, by enabling all students access to the curriculum and to accommodate different students' backgrounds, prerequisite understanding, language proficiency, and special needs.

Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge of content and pedagogy in many ways, including planning and presenting content, and responding to student questions and comments throughout the lesson. A knowledgeable teacher will know whether a student's question is important to the discipline and therefore worth pursuing in depth, or whether it represents a sidebar and can be answered immediately and the lesson moved along.

INSTRUCTIONAL DECISION-MAKING

A lesson's activities, as revealed both in the planning documents and in their execution in the classroom, must serve to achieve the lesson's purpose. In a well-designed lesson, these tasks and activities are sequenced and designed to engage students in the intellectual work of learning.

Furthermore, "clarity" extends to the activities themselves. Students should not be in the dark about how to complete an activity, what steps they should take, whether it's to be done on their own or with classmates, and how learning will be assessed. Instructive assessments will be grounded in the clarity of instructional purposes and the accuracy of content.

Well-run classrooms are purposeful and joyful. Students and teachers are clear in what they are doing and what desired learning is being pursued. There is a sense conveyed, through both words and actions, that the lesson is important and learning is exhilarating and empowering. Serendipity may permit the extension of learning into other areas, but the fundamentals are clear and grounded in the teacher's deep knowledge of content and ways to engage students in that content.

Considerations

In what ways do the learning outcomes challenge students to think critically?

In what ways are learning outcomes reflective of the standards of the discipline and appropriate to the students' levels of knowledge and skill?

Examples of Practice

Learning outcomes reflect the range of types of knowledge and skills represented in the discipline as specified by CCSS or other high-level standards, e.g., factual and procedural knowledge, reasoning and cooperative skills, and higher-order thinking (1a, 1c).

Learning outcomes are clearly communicated to and suitable for the students in the class (1b, 1e).

Considerations

What examples do you see of congruence between the activities and instructional outcomes?

How do the tasks engage students in high-level learning in the discipline?

Examples of Practice

Activities, planned resources, questions, student discussions, and assignments are aligned to the learning outcomes (1b, 1d, 1f).

Lesson execution makes clear the expectations for student learning, and contains accurate content, clear explanations, and academic language (1a, 3a).

CONTENT & CURRICULUM

Teachers also demonstrate their knowledge of content through reflection on and analysis of the lesson. By identifying successful portions of the lesson (while other portions were less so) and the reasons for these discrepancies, they demonstrate understanding of internal connections between different aspects of the content and how student learning can be assured.

Another way teachers exhibit mastery of content is through imaginative use of metaphors and analogies, illustrating points they are making as they explain concepts and relationships among concepts. Such visual images often bring content to life in new ways for students, and help students develop their own flexibility with the content.

Consideration

How does teachers' deep understanding of the content support intellectual work by students during lessons?

Example of Practice

The teacher's content expertise is evident as they support student learning throughout the lesson (1a).



THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
The instructional purpose and learning tasks are unclear; the information presented is inaccurate or inappropriate and unsuitable to the students, through some combination of the following: The teacher's plans indicate weak content knowledge. The teacher does not try to ascertain varied skill and ability levels among students in the class to use in planning. Learning outcomes, as stated by the teacher, are poorly aligned to the learning standards and either lack clarity or are stated as activities. They are unsuitable for many students in the class. Planned learning tasks, materials, and question sequences are of low cognitive challenge, are unrelated to the lesson's stated purpose, or are unsuitable for many students. At no time during the lesson does the teacher convey to the students what they will be learning. The teacher makes a serious error of content or academic language that will affect students' understanding of the lesson. Students indicate through body language or verbal exchanges that they don't understand the content being presented. Students appear confused about the learning task.	The instructional purpose and learning tasks are somewhat clear; the information presented is primarily accurate and partially appropriate to the students, through some combination of the following: The teacher's plans reflect rudimentary understanding of the content. The teacher is aware that there are different skill and ability levels in the class but does not use this information in planning. Learning outcomes, as stated by the teacher, are a combination of outcomes and activities or lack clarity; they are only partially aligned to the learning standards and are unsuitable for some students in the class. Planned learning tasks, materials, and question sequences are of moderate cognitive challenge or are only partially related to the lesson's stated purpose, or both. They are unsuitable for some students. The teacher refers in passing to what the students will be learning, or it is written on the board with no elaboration or explanation. The teacher makes no serious content errors but may possibly make minor ones, including imprecise use of academic language. The teacher's explanation of the content consists of a monologue, with minimal participation or intellectual engagement by students. The teacher finds it necessary to clarify the learning task so that students can complete it.	The instructional purpose and learning tasks are clear, the content presented is accurate and suitable to the students, through some combination of the following: The teacher can identify important concepts of the discipline and their relationships to one another. The teacher has identified broad skill groups of students within the class and uses this information in planning. Learning outcomes, as stated by the teacher, are expressed in the form of student learning and are aligned to the learning standards. They are suitable for the groups of students in the class. Planned learning tasks, materials, and question sequences support the lesson's purpose; they are well sequenced, provide cognitive challenge, and are suitable for most students in the class. The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students are learning. The teacher makes no content errors and models the correct use of academic language. The teacher's explanation of content is clear and invites student participation and thinking. Students engage with the learning task, indicating that they understand what they are to do; if modeling the process to be followed in the task is appropriate, the teacher does so.	The purpose and learning tasks of the lesson are very clear, and the content presented is accurate and accessible to the students, through some combination of the following, in addition to elements listed under Proficient: The teacher cites intra- and interdisciplinary content relationships. The teacher knows the proficiency level of each student in the class and incorporates this understanding into plans. Learning outcomes are written in the form of student learning and are aligned to learning standards. They allow for all students in the class to be suitably challenged. Planned learning tasks and materials permit advanced students to extend the lesson's purpose and provide students who require it with more time, attention, and supports. The teacher states clearly, at some point during the lesson, what the students are learning, and invites students to connect this learning to the broader outcomes of the curriculum. The teacher explains content clearly, using metaphors and analogies or inviting student predictions to connect content to real life experiences. The teacher's carefully-crafted questions enable students to extend the lesson objectives for deeper understanding. Students have the opportunity for reflection and closure on the content being learned, especially its relation to the unit or broader purposes.



CLUSTER 2 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Challenging Learning Environment

To do their best work and commit to the activity called school, students must feel respected and honored as people. They must sense their teachers believe in their capabilities; many adults can trace their success in school and in later years to a teacher who believed they could be somebody. For some students, the experience of an adult who conveys such confidence can be life altering.

Many adults are convinced that they "can't do math" or "were never good at reading poetry." Although it's difficult to know the origin of such sentiments, teachers should never convey them. When teachers indicate that they sincerely honor all students in their journey for understanding, students can engage in that quest assured of deep support by the teacher. It's a safe environment, in other words, for students to take intellectual risks, to try out ideas, to question the teacher's—or the book's, or another student's—account.

It is crucial for educators to be aware of research on mindset and how their own students view the role of intelligence in learning. Do they believe intelligence is fixed or malleable, and do they believe student success is a result of intelligence or hard work? Researchers and teachers find that when students acquire a growth (rather than a fixed) mindset, they are more capable of persevering through the inevitable difficulties all learners encounter in mastering complex material. Thus, teachers have an obligation to encourage such a growth mindset in their students.

FOCUS AREAS Successful teachers focus on...

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Positive developmental relationships are characterized by care and respect between teacher and students and among students, and support a sense of safety and belonging.

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

Intellectual challenge is evidenced by high expectations, high levels of cognitive energy, and risk-taking.

SUPPORT & PERSISTENCE

Support & persistence are demonstrated in the classroom environment; students persevere through challenges in their quest for mastery.

Components for Success:

2a Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

2b Establishing a Culture for Learning

2c Managing Classroom Procedures

2a Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

2b Establishing a Culture for Learning

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Teachers convey respect and care for students through myriad verbal and nonverbal cues: listening carefully to students' ideas, asking for clarification and elaboration, or displaying sensitivity to students' feelings. A teacher's attitude maybe outwardly friendly or stern, but beneath the stern demeanor the teacher must still convey a sense of care, regardless of background or family circumstances, and each student is important and has potential.

The atmosphere of support and respect is not confined to students as people but extends to them as learners. Students know they need not fear ridicule or unkind sarcasm from the teacher or from other students. As the emotional environment signals support and respect, the physical environment conveys learning is important and is rich and inviting.

Considerations

In what ways do classroom interactions demonstrate genuine caring and a safe, respectful, supportive, and challenging learning environment?

How do teachers establish environments that recognize and value students' identities as well as their social, emotional, and intellectual needs?

Example of Practice

There exists a language of caring and respect between teacher and students and among students, and the teacher is aware of students' interests in and beyond school (2a).

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGE

In feeling safe with the teacher and other students, students must also feel challenged, and they must be willing to rise to that challenge. This is partly through the nature of the work itself; that work must be rigorous, engaging, and meaningful. But in addition, students must be willing to make a commitment to it. There must be, in other words, a prevailing norm of student commitment to high-level work; those who engage in such work must not be regarded by their classmates as "geeks," or "nerds," or some other term that, in student culture, denotes un-cool.

Student cultural attitudes toward work vary profoundly from one age group and from one school to another. Overwhelmingly, young children are keen to learn and to explore the world; if instructional tasks are interesting, then they participate willingly and aim to excel. With older students, the situation is more complex; most efforts students make to succeed in school, after all, take place in private— for example, completing their homework assignments and studying for tests. But other actions occur in public, in front of their peers, such as participating in class discussions and engaging in group work. Thus, students who decide to make a commitment to high-level work in school are making a public declaration of that commitment. It's essential that they not become isolated or "punished" by their peers for that commitment.

Considerations

How do teachers convey high expectations for student learning and encourage hard work and perseverance?

In what ways do teachers create classrooms that are safe for risk-taking?

Examples of Practice

There are high levels of cognitive energy (2b).

There are high expectations for students' capabilities for learning (2b).

Students engage productively in small group work (2c).

SUPPORT & PERSISTENCE

Teachers whose classrooms are safe, challenging environments for student learning have artfully combined challenge with support. They know their students well enough to know when a student has "blown off" an assignment, or when, in contrast, the student simply does not understand a concept well enough to complete high-quality work. When it comes to student commitment to learning, teachers don't take "no" for an answer, and are ready to provide assistance when needed. This teaching is not formulaic; it is a high-level professional enterprise in which teachers know when to cajole, when to reteach, when to praise, and when to enlist the participation of other students—all in the service of high-level learning within an environment of challenge and support. Within this environment, students persevere in their quest for deep understanding and mastery.

Consideration

In what ways do teachers create classrooms that are safe for risk-taking?

Examples of Practice

Students feel safe to take intellectual risks (2a).

Students persevere, even in the face of challenges (2b).



THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
Interactions between teacher and at least some students and among students are characterized by negativity, lack of support, low expectations, and low levels of student perseverance, through some combination of the following: The teacher uses disrespectful talk toward students and does not address disrespectful interactions among students. The teacher displays no familiarity with, or caring about, individual students' interests or personalities. The teacher conveys, to at least some students, that the work is too challenging for them. Students exhibit little or no pride in their work; they abandon their efforts in the face of difficulty. Students participate in only routine responses and tasks that require only low levels of risk taking. The teacher makes a serious error of content or academic language that will affect students' understanding of the lesson. Students receive no support from their classmates. Students show no signs of active collaboration.	Interactions between teacher and students and among students are a mix of high and low support, moderate expectations, and modest levels of student perseverance, through some combination of the following: The quality of interactions between teacher and students, or among students, is uneven, with occasional disrespect; the teacher attempts to respond to disrespectful behavior among students, with uneven results. The teacher attempts to make connections with individual students, but student reactions indicate that the efforts are only partially successful. The teacher conveys only modest learning expectations for most students. The teacher encourages students to persevere with challenging work; but only some do so, or they do so in a desultory manner. Few students offer their ideas on questions that seem to entail intellectual risk. The teacher makes no serious content errors but may possibly make minor ones, including imprecise use of academic language. Students offer assistance to classmates in a supportive manner when prompted by the teacher. Group work is sometimes collaborative, sometimes not.	The classroom is characterized by interactions that are both supportive and challenging, with student perseverance in challenging work, through some combination of the following: Interactions between teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful, with little to no intervention needed by the teacher to correct disrespectful talk among students. The teacher makes connections with individual students. The teacher has high expectations for most students and conveys high regard for students' abilities. Student work and conduct during a lesson indicate a commitment to high quality; students persevere in understanding challenging content. Students participate willingly and appear confident in offering their ideas in front of classmates. The teacher makes no content errors and models the correct use of academic language. Students spontaneously offer assistance to classmates in a supportive manner. Students are productively engaged collaboratively with a partner or during small-group work.	Classroom interactions indicate high levels of caring and respect, student assumption of responsibility for the culture of civility, mutual support for work of high quality, and perseverance in achieving that quality, through some combination of the following, in addition to elements listed under Proficient: Interactions between teacher and students and among students is uniformly respectful, with no intervention needed by the teacher to correct disrespectful talk among students. The teacher demonstrates knowledge and caring about the lives of students beyond school. Students' questions, comments, and writing indicate high expectations for self and a desire for deep understanding of the content. Students engage in productive struggle, take initiative to improve the quality of their work, and look for ways to extend their learning. Students volunteer ideas, even when these ideas might seem to be unpopular among classmates. The teacher explains content clearly, using metaphors and analogies or inviting student predictions to connect content to real life experiences. Students recognize and express appreciation for the efforts of their classmates. Group work is productive; groups take shared ownership of, and pride in, the products of their work. All members contribute to the group's work.



CLUSTER 3 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom Management

A fundamental requirement for any productive classroom is that it runs smoothly. Teachers must establish efficient procedures for the completion of routine tasks, such as taking attendance, guiding transitions into work groups, distributing and collecting materials, and handling end-of-class dismissal. These procedures accomplish several essential purposes, are taken care of with a minimal loss of instructional time, and provide the security of familiar routines for students. Efficient routines convey to students that the teacher is in charge, though not a dictator, thus assuring them that they need not fear chaos.

Classrooms are, after all, crowded places; there are typically over 25 students (and sometimes more), plus a teacher, in a relatively small space. This fact is a source of anxiety for many new teachers; they fear the class size will overwhelm them, particularly if the students are physically larger than the teacher. What is to prevent students from simply refusing to comply with the teacher's directions?

How will they avoid chaos, with students doing whatever they choose, perhaps causing harm to themselves or other students? How can a teacher ensure that students actually learn anything? What is to guarantee that students will follow the rules, rather than take charge themselves? These are not unreasonable questions, and a new teacher's anxieties are understandable.

In creating and then monitoring classroom routines and procedures, including behavioral norms, a teacher should keep in mind the following principles.

FOCUS AREAS Successful teachers focus on...

ROUTINES & PROCEDURES

Routines & procedures create efficiency and clarity to support joyful, productive engagement in learning activities.

2c Managing Classroom Procedures

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Collective responsibility is shown by all members of the classroom community through monitoring of the standards of conduct, execution of procedures and routines, and productive contributions to learning.

2c Managing Classroom Procedures
2d Managing Student Behavior

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The physical environment is supportive of learning and appropriate for the social, emotional, and academic needs of all students.

2a Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
2b Establishing a Culture of Learning
2e Organizing Physical Space

Components for Success:

ROUTINES & PROCEDURES

Routines and norms should be created with student participation. Students need to feel in control of their lives; they are quickly alienated by a teacher whose approach to classroom management is one of ***This is how it is because I say so***. Moreover, classroom routines are established not only to maintain an orderly environment, but to solve real or potential practical problems. Students like having a chance to speak in a discussion, the challenge is working out an approach allowing everyone the opportunity to be heard. The same thinking applies to virtually all routines: the question ***What would happen if we all just went for the door at the same time?*** will elicit, even from young children, the recognition that the result would be chaotic—chairs could be overturned or some students knocked over. Next can come the question, ***What might be some reasonable procedures for leaving the room?***

The teacher's attitude in establishing routines and procedures is all-important. It's essential for teachers to establish, with students, an environment in which important and interesting work can be accomplished. Therefore, routines and norms are needed for many activities: distributing and collecting materials, keeping a neat classroom, moving between large- and small-group activities, and so on. The purpose of routines is to maximize student learning; it's not because the teacher insists on control. This attitude permits the teacher to sincerely elicit student contributions.

COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Routines must be taught. But even after students and the teacher have developed routines and norms for classroom operations, those routines must be taught and practiced. Teachers cannot assume students will automatically know what is intended by a direction such as ***Move into your small work groups***. Unless students have practiced a routine to accomplish such a task, the alternative, given the crowded nature of many classrooms, can be chaos.

Experienced teachers devote some time at the beginning of a year to teaching routines for all sorts of everyday classroom procedures: distributing and collecting materials, pushing chairs in at the end of class, and so on. Teaching routines is the same as teaching other skills: the routine is described, then students have a structured opportunity to practice it and do it again, incorporating feedback about the success of the first attempt. The same also applies to norms of behavior; they can be isolated, and role- played, so students know what to expect when involved in a situation calling for a teacher to take corrective action. In this way, students are not caught off guard, or unprepared, by events.

Considerations

In what ways are classrooms well run and organized?

How might classroom routines and procedures be clearer or carried out more efficiently to prevent loss of instructional time?

Example of Practice

There are efficient procedures for non-instructional activities, e.g., taking roll, distributing and collecting materials, and making transitions (2c).

Considerations

How might students themselves take a more active role in ensuring a productive classroom?

In what ways do students not only understand and comply with standards of conduct but also play an active part in setting the tone for maintaining those standards?

Examples of Practice

Students follow clear guidelines for unsupervised (e.g., small group and independent) work (2c).

Clear standards of conduct are understood by students, monitored by the teacher, and corrected successfully by the teacher and/or classmates when necessary (2d).

When present, volunteers and paraprofessionals contribute productively to the class (2c).

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Unless they are obliged to teach "from a cart" or for other reasons have no consistent use of physical space, teachers exercise a lot of control over the physical environment in which they work. That physical environment can itself exert a powerful influence over what takes place in a classroom: the nature of teacher-student and student-student interactions, the success of large and small group discussions, and the like. As with other aspects of the classroom environment, students can (and should) play a role in maximizing the contribution of the physical space for their learning. This influence can take the form of suggesting revisions to the arrangement of classroom furniture, to ensuring that traffic patterns support maximum student engagement.

An observer can only infer from teacher directions and student actions whether routines were, in fact, established earlier in the year. Moreover, teachers who are fortunate enough to have the assistance of volunteers or paraprofessionals in their classrooms have the additional challenge of ensuring those individuals are productively engaged in making a substantive contribution to the life of the class.

Consideration

How does the physical environment in classrooms support learning and engagement?

Examples of Practice

The physical environment supports learning activities and a positive, respectful classroom culture (2a, 2b, 2e).

All students are able to access the classroom's physical space comfortably (2e).



THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
The classroom environment is disorganized and chaotic, through some combination of the following: Classroom procedures for transitions and other non-instructional activities are either absent or ineffective, resulting in the loss of significant instructional time. Small groups not working with the teacher are not involved in productive work. No standards of conduct appear to have been established, the teacher does not monitor student behavior, or, when noticing student misbehavior, appears helpless to do anything about it. There are physical hazards in the classroom, endangering student safety. Volunteers and paraprofessionals have no defined role and may be idle much of the time.	The classroom is at times disorganized, through some combination of the following: Procedures for transitions, materials, and other non-instructional duties seem to have been established, but their operation is rough or inconsistent, resulting in some loss of instructional time. Small groups are only intermittently engaged while not working directly with the teacher. Standards of conduct appear to have been set, but the teacher's attempts to maintain order are uneven, or the teacher's response to student misbehavior is inconsistent. The physical environment is not an impediment to learning but does not enhance it. Volunteers and paraprofessionals participate but require frequent supervision, or their work is not well integrated with classroom activities.	The classroom functions smoothly and efficiently, through some combination of the following: Effective and efficient procedures have been established for non-instructional activities, such as distribution and collection of materials and supplies and transitions to other grouping patterns, resulting in minimal to no loss of instructional time. Students carry out procedures with little or no teacher direction. All students are productively engaged during small-group work, indicating established procedures. The teacher regularly monitors student behavior; student behavior is generally appropriate. When needed, the teacher's response to misbehavior is effective. The classroom is arranged to support the instructional goals and learning activities. Volunteers and paraprofessionals work with minimal supervision in sync with classroom goals.	The classroom functions seamlessly, through some combination of the following, in addition to elements listed under Proficient: Students take the initiative with their classmates to ensure non-instructional routines run smoothly; productive classroom norms are well established, and students as well as the teacher act to maintain them. Students ensure productive small-group work by, for example, assigning roles. The teacher's monitoring of student behavior is seamless and preventative, accomplished largely through nonverbal means; student behavior is entirely appropriate. Students take the initiative to contribute to and adjust the physical environment to support learning for all students. Volunteers and paraprofessionals understand their roles and responsibilities and take initiative in their work in the class.



CLUSTER 4 INTELLECTUAL ENGAGEMENT

Student Intellectual Engagement

Student engagement is at the heart of good teaching; it is often the first item educators identify when describing the classroom of a teacher whom they consider an expert. However, engagement does not have a single, or simple, definition. While one indicator of student intellectual engagement might be the answer to the question, "Who's doing the work?", intellectual engagement is not the same as being busy or on task. It's possible for students to do work—for example, completing a worksheet—that does not represent new learning. Furthermore, physical activity is not sufficient; a task might be "hands-on," but to qualify as intellectual engagement, it must be "minds-on."

During some teacher presentations or demonstrations, students can be entirely passive. However, teachers may present new material in a way that invites students to connect new information with prior understanding, predict outcomes, explore nuances, and generate new understanding. Thus, a variation on the maxim Who's doing the work? is Who's doing the thinking? Only when students are actively thinking are they intellectually engaged.

In addition, students can become aware of their own cognitive processes when teachers engage students not only in cognitive work, but also in metacognitive work. How did they arrive at a certain conclusion? What's the evidence for it? When they make an error, what was the trajectory of their thinking? Where did it go off track? Can they retrace their steps and find the error? This metacognitive work is highly transferable to other situations, and indeed to other subjects.

Student engagement in learning does not always appear tidy; when students are wrestling with a new concept or making connections between new content and previously learned material, they may make a few false starts. It's challenging for some teachers to allow their students to engage in this productive struggle, but it ultimately is satisfying to students, empowering them as learners and solidifying their comprehension.

FOCUS AREAS

Successful teachers focus on...

LESSON STRUCTURE & FLOW

Lesson structure & flow allow for and support intellectual engagement and productive struggle; students are given time to think, develop ideas, and reflect on their learning.

RICH LEARNING TASKS

Rich learning tasks engage students in important learning through well-designed activities, questions, and discussion.

STUDENT COLLABORATION & DISCOURSE

Student collaboration & discourse invite higher-order thinking, develop reasoning skills, and create the opportunity to engage thoughtfully with others' thinking and ideas.

Components for Success:

3c Engaging Students in Learning

2b Establishing a Culture for Learning

3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

3a Communicating with Students

3b Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

3c Engaging Students in Learning

LESSON STRUCTURE & FLOW

For teachers, there are two critical aspects to teaching for student intellectual engagement: identifying and managing rich learning tasks and skillfully using student discourse. A lesson in which students are engaged usually has a discernible structure (a beginning, a middle, and an end) with scaffolding provided by the teacher or by the activities themselves. The teacher organizes student tasks to provide cognitive challenges and encourages students to reflect on what they have done and what they have learned. That is, the lesson has closure, in which the teacher encourages students to derive important learning from the learning tasks, from the discussion, or from what they have read.

Visitors have no difficulty recognizing a classroom with high levels of student cognitive engagement. There is palpable, almost electric energy in the room, as students display commitment to their work and are eager to explain their accomplishments to visitors. This is not the busywork of students complying with a teacher's requests for them to complete assignments; in a classroom in which students are pursuing their own goals, their work is self-directed, and the environment is vibrant.

RICH LEARNING TASKS

Designing or identifying suitably demanding learning tasks for students is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching, since a task that is challenging for one student may be routine for another. One can analyze the cognitive demand of a task; whether the task is suitably rigorous, or appropriate, for an individual student is determined by the level of knowledge and cognitive development of the student. A task, in and of itself, is not rigorous or routine; what makes it rigorous or routine is the gap between the demands of the task and the current capabilities of the students who are asked to complete it. If the gap is small or nonexistent, the task is routine and boring; if the gap is too great, the task may be overwhelming. Like Goldilocks' porridge, the gap should be "just right."

Another characteristic of rich learning tasks relates to being "group-worthy," inviting multiple perspectives from different students working together in groups. Much classroom activity, after all, takes place in pairs or small groups, with the teacher playing a mediating role, rather than directly teaching. Tasks suitable for collaborative work enable students with different strengths to make a contribution to the overall effort.

Considerations

How do the structure and flow of lessons support the development of ideas and opportunities for students to engage in thoughtful discussion and reflection?

Example of Practice

The lesson has a recognizable structure, with time for reflection and closure (3b).

Considerations

In what ways do instructional activities and questions explored promote intellectual engagement and energy?

How do activities invite students to grapple with challenging content and solve problems in their collaborative and individual work?

Examples of Practice

The content is seen as worthwhile, important, and interesting (2b).

Content is presented in a manner that engages students in thinking and reasoning (3a).

Learning tasks require students to engage intellectually, to think; some may involve productive struggle (3c).

Questions/discussions involve higher-order cognitive activity; students have time to develop their ideas and productive habits of mind (3b).

STUDENT DISCOURSE

Questioning and discussion is used to deepen student understanding rather than serve as recitation, or a verbal "quiz." Effective teachers use divergent and convergent questions, framed in ways inviting students to formulate hypotheses, make connections, or challenge previously held views. These teachers are especially adept at responding to and building on student responses and making use of their ideas.

Class discussions should be animated, engaging students in important issues and promoting the use of precise language to deepen and extend understanding. These discussions may be based around questions formulated by the students themselves. Furthermore, when a teacher is building on student responses to questions (whether posed by the teacher or by other students), students are challenged to explain their thinking, to critique the reasoning of others, and to cite specific evidence to back up a position. This focus on argumentation forms the foundation of logical reasoning, a critical skill in all disciplines.

Consideration

How are students asked to explain their thinking, construct arguments, and question the thinking of others?

Example of Practice

Students explain their thinking and question the thinking of others (3b).



THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
The level of student intellectual engagement is low, through some combination of the following: The teacher conveys no energy for the importance of the learning goals and assignments. Content is presented in a didactic manner, with no invitation for students to think and make their own meaning. Learning tasks require only recall or have a single correct response or method; students are not invited to stretch their thinking. The teacher's questions are rapid-fire and convergent, with a single correct answer, and do not invite student thinking. The teacher does not ask students to organize their thoughts and formulate ideas. All discussion is between the teacher and individual students; students are not invited to respond directly to one another. The teacher does not ask students to explain their thinking. Few students are involved in the activities and discussions. The lesson has no recognizable structure; it's a random series of events and activities.	The level of student intellectual engagement is modest, through some combination of the following: The teacher displays little energy for the lesson's purpose or assignments. The teacher's explanation of concepts includes perfunctory invitations for student thinking. Learning tasks are so highly scaffolded that the result is a single pathway to completion. The teacher's questions are a mix of those with a single correct answer and methodology and other questions inviting student thinking. The teacher attempts to provide time for students to formulate their ideas; some make productive use of this time. The teacher invites students to respond directly to one another's ideas, but few students do so. The teacher asks students to explain their reasoning and cite specific evidence, but only some students attempt to do so. About half the students are involved in activities and discussions. The lesson has a recognizable structure, although parts of it may be rushed, while others drag.	The classroom is a cognitively busy place, with students encouraged to use their minds, through some combination of the following: The teacher exhibits energy for the topic and conveys its importance. The teacher's explanation of concepts invites student intellectual engagement and time to share their thinking with others. Learning tasks demand higher-order thinking, inviting students to take initiative, and may involve productive struggle. Many of the teacher's questions are open-ended, or have multiple correct answers, inviting students to think. (When low-level questions are used, they provide scaffolding for new learning.) Wait time is used productively; students engage in thoughtful reflection during discussion. Students direct their comments to one another during full class discussions; there is lively discussion during small-group work. The teacher asks students to explain their thinking and reasoning, citing specific evidence; many students do so. Virtually all students are involved in the activities and discussions. The lesson has a clear structure, with time for students to engage in thoughtful participation in discussions and learning tasks.	The classroom is a cognitively vibrant place, with students encouraged to use their minds, through some combination of the following, in addition to elements listed under Proficient: The students exhibit energy for and interest in the topic and associated tasks; they push their classmates' thinking with extended questions. Students are thoughtfully engaged in the teacher's explanation of concepts, as evidenced by their conversations and questions. Students modify a learning task to make it more meaningful or relevant to their needs. Students initiate higher-order questions; they invite comments from their classmates during a discussion and push their classmates with extended questions in both small group and whole class contexts. Students extend the discussion, enriching it. Students build on each other's ideas and make conjectures/connections aimed at either deeper conceptual understanding or connecting procedures to underlying concepts. Students initiate efforts to explore the reasoning that led to a conclusion that warrants revision, identifying fallacies in their thinking. Students themselves ensure that all their classmates are involved in the activities and discussions. Students have an opportunity for reflection and closure on the lesson to consolidate their understanding.



CLUSTER 5 SUCCESSFUL LEARNING

Successful Learning by All Students

It is not sufficient for teachers to engage in an activity called teaching; they must ensure students learn. One way of defining teaching is as that which causes student learning. While this appears an obvious statement, educators frequently overlook it as they attempt to codify good teaching in ways that focus exclusively on actions of teachers without considering success of those efforts in ensuring student learning. Experienced teachers recognize all learning as complex, involving the interplay of conceptual and procedural knowledge, facts and processes, dispositions and habits of mind. Students don't "master" all of these in the same way, or in the same sequence, and they enter any lesson with their own strengths and areas for growth.

Traditionally, teachers did not ascertain the extent to which their students learned the material being taught until they had completed an instructional unit; indeed, the assessment (usually a test of some type) signaled the end of instruction, students' work was graded, and the class went on to the next unit. Many teachers now employ a subtler approach designed to shape instruction during the course of a lesson or unit. Teachers monitor students' responses and activities constantly, monitoring the "pulse" of the class frequently during a lesson and making revisions when needed. These changes might be a slight modification in the pace of an activity or in an activity itself based on students' lack of comprehension (too challenging) or boredom (too easy). Such monitoring occurs constantly and is not specifically planned.

Another important mechanism ensuring students' success is arranging for specific and timely feedback on their efforts. The teacher can provide this feedback, of course. But it can also be supplied by other students (as when they challenge—respectfully—the thinking of their classmates) or by the instructional activities themselves. For example, the solution to a problem in mathematics may simply "not work." Whatever the source of the feedback, students come to realize that learning is a process of continual iteration; it's never complete.

FOCUS AREAS Successful teachers focus on...

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Equitable access to important and rigorous content is supported for each student.

ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

Assessment & feedback advance learning and inform necessary modifications and additional supports.

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

Shared accountability for mastery and growth is established between teachers, students, and families.

Components for Success:

1d Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

3e Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

1f Designing Student Assessments

3d Using Assessment in Instruction

4b Maintaining Accurate Records

3a Communicating with Students

4a Reflecting on Teaching

4b Maintaining Accurate Records

4c Communicating with Families

THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Experienced teachers recognize that every lesson and longer unit has a focus and goal and that there are many paths to helping students master the goals and concepts without sacrificing high expectations for all students. As such, they infuse an equity lens into their lesson design and delivery of instruction to ensure every child has the resources—materials, concepts and supports—needed to access the lesson and attain the lesson/unit goal. This requires teachers to articulate and make specific plans to modify lessons, resources and instruction to ensure optimal student success.

Ascertaining whether students have, in fact, learned what was intended requires the design or adoption of summative assessments aligned to those outcomes so that the teacher can take corrective action before moving on, and formative assessments used during the course of a unit or lesson. This requires sophisticated record-keeping systems. In addition, for teachers to improve their approach, they must not only be aware of resources (in the school or, more broadly, in the district or the community); they must commit to what is needed to help every student succeed.

ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK

To be effective, monitoring student learning must be addressed to individual students. Global questions, such as **Does anyone have any questions?** are unlikely to yield information on which a teacher can act. Instead, accomplished teachers devise techniques to determine the levels of understanding of individuals. If the question is designed to yield diagnostic information, the teacher acquires a fairly specific notion of what needs to be done, ensuring every student understands the content. While not providing such timely information, exit tickets, on which students hand in their response to a carefully designed question as they leave the class, can also supply information on the learning of individual students.

When teachers use such practices, assessment becomes completely integrated into instruction. Teachers are alert to what's going on during a lesson, watching students for indications they are following the discussion or are acquiring the desired understanding from an instructional activity. Sometimes students provide such indications explicitly; for example, they ask clarifying questions. On other occasions, however, the indications are much more subtle or

Considerations

In what ways do teachers ensure learning by all students?

In what ways do teachers respond to students' needs during instructional time?

In what ways do teachers modify/adapt materials and resources to respond to student needs while maintaining high expectations?

Example of Practice

If necessary, the teacher modifies the lesson to ensure that all students "get it," drawing on other resources as needed (1d, 3e).

Considerations

What are some ways teachers monitor student understanding through specifically designed questions or assessment strategies?

How do students provide constructive feedback to classmates?

How can teachers make strategic modifications to their lessons or leverage other sources of support based on student learning and progress?

Examples of Practice

The teacher's records enable detailed analyses of student learning, both individually and by groups/whole classes (4b).

Summative and formative assessments are planned and designed to align with learning outcomes (1f).

The teacher monitors student learning during the lesson (individuals and groups) through a variety of means (3d).

Students receive specific feedback on their work from the teacher, the activities themselves, and/or other students (3d).



camouflaged, for example a quizzical look. That said, some objectives are long-term and necessitate more time for students to work toward achieving mastery. Taking into consideration assessment information, the teacher can articulate how students are progressing toward a larger learning goal. In addition, it is important to note students will be engaged in assessing their own progress—working with deliberateness toward goals and aware of how much progress they have made.

SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY

Families, too, can be allies in a teacher's quest to ensure student success. They have, after all, known the students for a longer time than the teacher has and can provide insight into the students' lives and interests beyond school. Such information can be invaluable to a teacher in planning instruction and responding to individuals. Skilled teachers keep parents and guardians abreast of students' success in school and work with families to enhance that success. Additionally, there are communication systems in place where students' records and goals are easily accessible to parents or guardians.

Attention to every student's learning is grounded in important assumptions, namely, that students are capable of high-level learning and that the teacher has the necessary skill, resources, and attitude to help them succeed. These beliefs are fundamental. When teachers have a strong sense of efficacy, then they will be better able to help students when they are experiencing difficulty, as virtually all students do at some point. When students experience difficulties or learn new concepts, the teacher sees these times as opportunities for students to expand their thinking and resiliency. The teacher believes and models a growth mindset, allowing students to take academic risks without fear of failure or ridicule. Within units and lessons, teachers are using a variety of formative and summative assessments to monitor student growth and learning. Overall, when teachers ensure each of their students reaches class goals and objectives, it is a reflection of their confidence that they can teach well and that their students are capable of high-level learning.

Considerations

When teachers reflect on a lesson or unit, what are some ways they demonstrate awareness of their success in promoting student engagement and learning?

How do teachers create the conditions for students to take responsibility for their own learning?

Examples of Practice

The teacher enlists, as appropriate, the engagement of families in student learning (4c).

In reflection, the teacher assumes responsibility for student learning (4a).

There are systems and/or routines in place for students to monitor their progress and take action to improve their understanding and performance (4b, 3c).

THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
The teacher makes no attempt to ensure the learning of all students, through some combination of the following: Summative assessments are poorly aligned with the learning outcomes. No formative assessments have been designed for use during the lesson. The teacher makes no effort to determine whether students understand the content of the lesson or ignores indications of student boredom or lack of understanding. Feedback to students is only global, such as, "Good job, everyone." The teacher makes no attempt to adjust the lesson, even when such action is clearly needed. The teacher conveys to students that when they have difficulty learning, it is their fault. Record-keeping systems are disorganized and incomplete; families are unaware of their children's progress. In reflecting on the lesson, the teacher cites the extent to which students were busy or were well behaved, with no comments about the extent to which they achieved the intended outcomes.	The teacher makes sporadic or inconsistent attempts to ensure the learning of all students, through some combination of the following: Only some of the learning outcomes are addressed in summative assessments. Plans refer to the use of formative assessments but with no specificity. The teacher requests global indications of student understanding, such as, "Any questions?" Feedback to students is neither specific nor oriented toward future improvement of work. The teacher's efforts to modify the lesson are only partially successful. The teacher conveys to students a sense of responsibility for their learning but also uncertainty about how to assist them. The teacher maintains school- required record-keeping systems and communicates sporadically with families but does little else to inform families about student progress. In reflecting on the lesson, the teacher cites only limited evidence of student attainment of the instructional goals with an emphasis on other factors, such as whether students were busy or well behaved.	The teacher makes thoughtful and genuine attempts to ensure the learning of all students, through some combination of the following: All the learning outcomes have a method for summative assessment, differentiated, as needed, for students with different learning goals. Plans include specific formative assessments which are used during instruction. The teacher monitors student learning through a variety of means, including using specifically formulated questions, differentiated as needed, to elicit evidence of student understanding. Feedback includes specific and timely guidance on how students can improve their learning. The teacher makes effective changes to the lesson in response to evidence of student difficulties. The teacher conveys to students that they have other approaches to try if or when the students experience difficulty. The teacher maintains a coherent record-keeping system on student learning and regularly sends home information about student learning. In reflecting on the lesson, the teacher cites specific examples of student attainment of the instructional goals or conjectures about why they were not met.	The teacher consistently and successfully ensures learning by all students, through some combination of the following, in addition to elements listed under Proficient: The teacher's plan for summative assessment explicitly provides information to students about their progress. The teacher constantly "takes the pulse" of the class; monitoring of student understanding is sophisticated and continuous and makes use of strategies to elicit information about individual student learning. Students monitor their own learning, either on their own initiative or as a result of tasks set by the teacher. High-quality feedback comes from many sources, including other students; it is specific and focused on improvement. When appropriate, students use assessment information to guide their next steps. The teacher conveys to students that failure, persistence, and productive struggle are key aspects of learning and success. The teacher actively encourages two-way communication with families regarding student learning. In reflecting on the lesson, the teacher has specific ideas about how the lesson could be improved. The teacher cites student assessment data that will be taken into account in future planning.

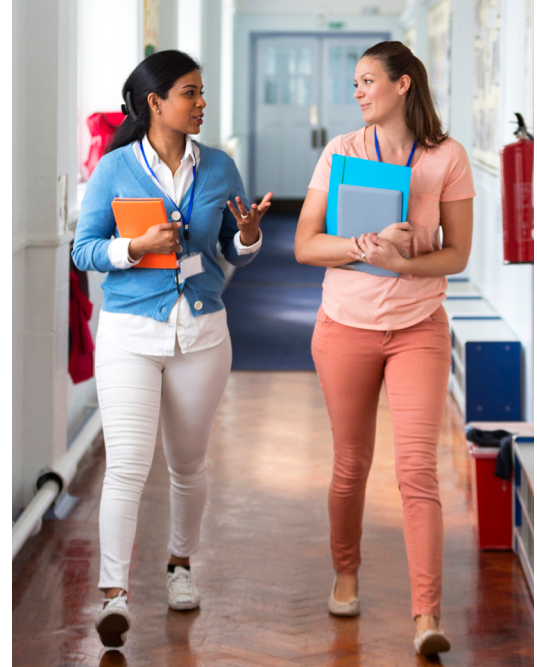


CLUSTER 6 PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism

Schools are, above all, environments to promote the learning of students; they are also places for the intellectual engagement of teachers, so they can better promote the learning of their students.

Schools are, in other words, learning organizations for teachers, with potential realized when teachers regard themselves as members of a professional community. This community is characterized by mutual support and respect as well as by recognition of responsibility to constantly seek improvement within their practice and contribute to the life of the school and the broader professional community. Inevitably, teachers' duties extend beyond the doors of their classrooms and include activities related to the entire school, larger district, or both. These activities include service on school and district curriculum committees or engagement with parent-teacher organizations. With experience, teachers assume leadership roles in these activities or others, and in their school communities in general.



FOCUS AREAS

Successful teachers focus on...

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Continuous professional learning and improvement are valued and consistently demonstrated through an inquiry-based, growth-focused, and results-oriented approach to professional engagement.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration with colleagues occurs frequently, involves active engagement, and is characterized by commitment and trust.

PRINCIPLED DECISION- MAKING

Principled decision-making consistently guides practice and interactions with students, families, colleagues, and community members.

Components for Success:

1d Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

4e Growing and Developing Professionally

4d Participating in a Professional Community

4f Showing Professionalism

THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

As in other professions, the complexity of teaching requires continued growth and development in order for teachers to keep their knowledge and skills current. Continuing to stay informed and develop skills allows teachers to become more effective, exercise leadership among their colleagues, and constantly refine their understanding of how to engage students in learning. Thus, growth in content and content-specific pedagogy is essential to good teaching. Technology is an aid to student learning; it's essential for teachers to stay abreast of developments in this area as well.

Consideration

How do teachers engage with the professional community (within the school and beyond) and demonstrate their commitment to ongoing professional learning?

Example of Practice

Teachers actively engage in workshops, courses, and activities to improve their practice (1d, 4e).



COLLABORATION

Networking with colleagues through activities such as joint planning, study groups, and lesson study provides opportunities for teachers to learn from one another. In particular, sharing perspectives while jointly examining student work can provide insight to the cognitive processes of individual students. These activities allow for job-embedded professional development. In addition, professional educators increase their effectiveness in the classroom by belonging to professional organizations (at the regional, state, or even national level), reading professional journals, and attending educational conferences, workshops, or university classes. As they gain experience and expertise, educators find ways to contribute to their colleagues and to the profession.

Considerations

In what ways do teachers collaborate productively with one another?

How can teachers be supported to contribute to the intellectual life of the school?

Example of Practice

Teachers collaborate with peers to plan for learning and implement school, district, and community initiatives (4d).

PRINCIPLED DECISION-MAKING

The teacher's primary responsibility is to promote the learning of students by placing their needs and the conditions that will support their education above other factors. The teacher's practice should be guided by principles that reflect this necessity. When making decisions, teachers take ownership of the outcome, considering the wellbeing of the student or students, the teacher's own values as a professional, and choosing outcomes that are culturally responsive and responsive to community needs, even when these decisions may challenge existing school or district policies. When appropriate and necessary, teachers challenge the status quo in order to further the interests of students and of the community at large.

Considerations

In what ways might teachers engage in professional learning and take on leadership roles in the school to promote student welfare?

How do teachers support a strong school culture and a climate of trust for staff, students, and families?

Example of Practice

Teachers demonstrate integrity and honesty in working with colleagues and parents on behalf of students (4f).



THE FRAMEWORK CLUSTERS

UNSATISFACTORY	BASIC	PROFICIENT	DISTINGUISHED
The teacher makes no attempt to continue with professional learning or engage with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following: The teacher's relationships with colleagues are characterized by negativity and lack of trust. The teacher avoids involvement both in school activities and in district and community projects. The teacher ignores or avoids opportunities to participate in activities for professional learning. The teacher declines to participate in team and departmental decision making, except when required by superiors. The teacher does not prioritize the needs of students and operates in a self-serving manner. The teacher ignores school and district regulations.	The teacher makes sporadic or inconsistent attempts to continue with professional learning or engage with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following: The teacher has cordial relationships with colleagues and is trusted by them. When asked, the teacher participates in school activities as well as district and community projects. The teacher participates in professional activities when they are required or provided by the district. The teacher participates minimally in team and departmental decision making. The teacher notices the needs of students but is inconsistent in addressing them. The teacher minimally complies with school and district regulations.	The teacher makes genuine attempts to continue with professional learning and to engage with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following: The teacher has supportive, collaborative, and trusting relationships with colleagues and is known for having high standards of integrity. The teacher frequently volunteers to participate in school events and in school, district, and community projects. The teacher seeks opportunities for continued professional development. The teacher actively participates in team and departmental decision making. The teacher actively addresses student needs and actively works to provide opportunities for student success. The teacher completely complies with the letter, as well as the spirit, of school and district regulations.	The teacher demonstrates a deep commitment to continuing professional learning and engages regularly with the professional community to advance the interests of students, through some combination of the following, in addition to elements listed under Proficient: The teacher takes initiative and a leadership role in organizing collaborative projects. The teacher regularly contributes to and leads significant district and community projects. The teacher takes a leadership role in finding opportunities for continued professional development and in contributing to professional organizations. The teacher takes a leadership role in team and departmental decision making and enjoys the trust of colleagues in terms of honesty, integrity, and confidentiality. The teacher makes a concerted effort to ensure opportunities are available for all students to be successful, even when these efforts challenge school or district policies. The teacher makes material suggestions for the improvement of school and district regulations.