

The Main Idea's PD Suggestions for *Learning by Doing*

PD Ideas for Developing Teacher Teams

PD Ideas Embedded in the Book – NOTE: The reproducibles below are provided on a CD that comes with the book

A big part of each chapter are actual PD suggestions. Each chapter provides: 1) a reproducible rubric to assess your school's current reality; 2) an action plan to help you think through next steps; 3) questions and tips to guide your implementation.

Clarifying your school's purpose	rubric pp.34-35	action plan p.36	tips & questions pp. 37-42
Clarifying your curriculum and assessments	rubric pp. 60-61	action plan pp.62-64	tips & questions pp. 65-69
Your response to students who don't learn	rubric p. 79	action plan p. 80	tips & questions pp. 81-87
Creating effective collaborative teams	rubric pp. 112	action plan p.113	tips & questions pp. 114-16
Creating a focus on results	rubric p. 139	action plan p. 140	tips & questions pp. 141-43
Using data/results for improvement	rubric p. 156	action plan p. 157	tips & questions pp. 158-62
Responding to conflict	rubric p. 178	action plan p. 179	tips & questions pp. 180-83

Why are we here? Clarifying your school's goals

1. Gather information about the school from the previous year to present to the staff. Ask a few teacher leaders to help with the collection. You can copy, fill out, and distribute "A Data Picture of Our School" (pp.17-18) which provides data on student achievement, engagement and discipline. Brainstorm other data you'd like to distribute to present an accurate picture of your school: % of students who failed two or more classes, % of teachers who tutor before/after school, etc., as well as a few detailed anecdotes.
2. Have the entire staff review the information from part 1. While you may not want to recreate the school's mission, bring the mission to the meeting. Divide the staff into small groups to look at the data and ask what the most surprising and expected pieces of data were. Ask staff to discuss the ways the data *supports* and *conflicts with* the school's mission.
3. One concrete way to highlight the school's goals is through *celebration*. To concretize the staff's discussions about the purpose of your school, ask teachers to come up with one new celebration which reflects the school's goals. Brainstorm a list of possible celebrations (ex. movie passes for students not absent for a month, an honor for a teacher who turns three failing students into passing students, etc.). Divide the teachers into groups to flesh out the details of one celebration, and have the entire staff vote on one new celebration to implement.

How can we most effectively work together?

1. As the principal, familiarize yourself with the reasons collaborative work improves the effectiveness of an organization. Read the quotations on p. 109 (perhaps post some in your office), read the case studies in the summary, and see the lists of benefits of collaboratively outlining learning and common assessments (summary, p. 3). There are also 17 sources linking collaboration to school improvement on p.110.
2. Ask staff to write about their past experiences – both positive and challenging – working in teams. Then in groups of 3, ask them to share their writing. Remember that teachers bring their past group experiences to new team efforts. After this, share some of the results from the literature, perhaps the quotes from p. 109. Expose the effectiveness of the school's current collaborative efforts by using the rubric on pp.60-61.
3. Divide the staff into two groups and ask each to list the pros and cons of working together to: 1) outline student learning; 2) create common formative assessments; and 3) respond to students who don't learn. Share these lists as a whole group and add new ideas.
4. Tell staff that they will be working collaboratively throughout the year to improve student achievement. Put the teachers into the groups they'll be working with and have them create 4 -6 team norms they would like to follow to help them operate more effectively. Give them samples of team norms (see the 6 norms listed on p. 5 of the summary or find more on pp. 102-107).
5. Have each team come up with its own team SMART goal. Keep the time frame short to help the team realize some early success and help reluctant team members buy into the group effort. To provide an example, copy a sample SMART goal worksheet (3rd grade, 8th grade math, or HS US history pp.129-32) and give each team a blank template (p. 133). Ask teams to trade goals and to assess whether these goals support the school's mission, whether they are truly SMART, and ask for other structured feedback.

What should our students learn and how should they be assessed?

1. Teachers should decide collaboratively what their students will learn *but* they need to know the requirements with which this learning should be aligned. Gather and distribute all information teachers need to make this decision such as state standards, sample state and national tests, prerequisite skills for the next grade, etc. (see a list of 10 items on p. 47). Then, based on the 3 criteria on p. 3 of the summary (does the knowledge endure, have leverage, and prepare the student for the next level), have teachers work in teams (either by grade or subject area) to choose the 8-10 learning outcomes for the first course. In the book, one suggestion is to use 3 colors of sticky notes and go through last year's lesson plans, as well as other local and state requirements, to decide what to "Keep," (yellow notes) "Drop," (pink) and "Create," (green).

2. Then teachers can create common formative assessments based on these 8-10 learning outcomes. Decide on the frequency of these assessments and emphasize the importance of assessing fewer concepts more frequently. After providing teams with your expectations, give them time to come up with their *first* common assessment. Then have teams share their assessments with other teams (perhaps those who teach the same grade level or subject) to get feedback. You may want to start by requiring common formative assessments in just language arts and math.

What do we do when our students don't learn?

1. Teachers need to see that creating individual responses to students who don't learn is ineffective. Review and share the information in the summary which states that a response to struggling students must be systematic and school-wide. The school needs to come up with a required, systematic and timely response *before* the school doors open. Present the reality of teachers' current approaches to struggling students by having them complete the rubric on p. 79.

2. It might help if teachers could see examples of systematic responses in place. Two examples are in the book (top of p.75 and p.83), four examples are presented in *Whatever It Takes: How PLCs Respond When Kids Don't Learn*, or you might want to bring in a staff member from a local school that has a system of interventions in place for struggling students to share their approach.

3. Have teachers brainstorm a list of *in school* responses. Choose the top three suggestions and either have a full staff vote or create a task force to flesh out and choose one response. You may also want to choose someone to oversee this system.