Putting Data at the Center
Structures and Strategies for High-Performing Teams

NESA Spring Educators Conference
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Developed by
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Outcomes:

Participants will:
- Learn practical structures and strategies for developing high-performing data teams

- Explore three modes of discourse for collaborative data-based decision making

- Refine and enhance their personal toolkit for facilitating productive group learning, planning, and problem solving.

Crafting the Container

- Starting the conversation

- Structuring the conversation

- Sustaining thinking in the conversation

Dealing with Data

Can result in
- Denial
- Dismissal
- Defensiveness
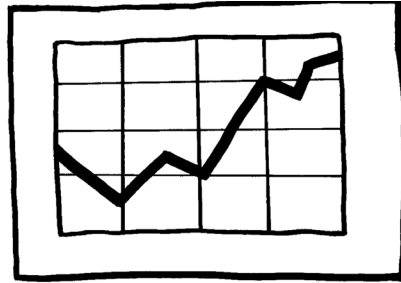
Data-Driven Dialogue

Requires and produces
- Psychological safety
- Cognitive resourcefulness
- Relational resilience

INFORMATION ALTITUDES

International
Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA)
International Baccalaureate (IB)
Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS)
Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

National
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
American College Testing (ACT)
Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment for English
   Language Learners (WIDA)

State/Province
Standards-Driven Assessments
Regents Exams
End of Course Exams
Competency-based Assessments

District
District-wide Assessments
Benchmark Assessments
Publishers' Tests
Rubrics, Scales and Checklists

School/Classroom
Individual Reading/Math Inventories
Running Records
Reading Conferences
Portfolios
Teacher-made Assessments

The Collaborative Learning Cycle

Structuring Dialogue for Connection Making

Activating and Engaging

Surfacing experiences and expectations

With what assumptions are we entering?
What are some predictions we are making?
What are some questions we are asking?
What are some possibilities for learning that
  this experience presents to us?

Organizing and Integrating

Generating theory

What inferences / explanations / conclusions
  might we draw? (causation)
What additional data sources might we explore
  to verify our explanations? (confirmation)
_____

What are some solutions we might explore
  as a result of our conclusions? (action)
What data will we need to collect to guide
  implementation? (calibration)

Managing
Modeling
Mediating
Monitoring

Exploring and Discovering

Analyzing the data

What important points seem to "pop-out"?
What are some patterns, categories or trends
  that are emerging?
What seems to be surprising or unexpected?
What are some ways we have not yet explored
  these data?

The Collaborative Learning Cycle

Productive discourse requires shape and structure. Thoughtfully designed processes increase focus, minimize distractions, and deepen exploration and analysis of data. Without such processes, group work disintegrates into excessive storytelling, over-certain and over-sold solutions, and premature rush to action spearheaded by just a few members of the group.

The collaborative learning cycle is a framework that establishes a learning forum for group exploration of data. Structured engagement with information and fellow learners ignites the processes of collaborative inquiry and problem solving. This inquiry-driven approach promotes specific cognitive processes and group member interaction in three phases.

Phase 1: Activating and Engaging

Powerful, data-based explorations start by cultivating conscious curiosity. This first phase establishes group work conventions and shapes expectations for how the data exploration will occur. Focusing attention for collaborative work is a perennial challenge for busy educators. Readiness to explore data requires the full physical, cognitive, and emotional energy of all group members. The activating and engaging phase prepares group members for this work by eliciting assumptions about learners and learning, as those assumptions relate to the data the group is about to explore.

Groups begin with predictions and anticipations about what the data might look like prior to actually seeing any data. These predictions illuminate areas of expectation and create anticipation and curiosity. For example, a group preparing to look at a mathematics assessment might first start with blank copies of the graphs that it will be examining. During the predicting phase, members would sketch in the bars or lines of the performance bands as they envision their predictions about the actual displays. Simultaneously, members would explore and record the assumptions on which those predictions are based.

By articulating their predictions and assumptions, individuals surface their frames of reference. For group members, this interaction increases understanding of the mental models that are guiding instructional decisions and teaching practices – their own and their colleagues'. It also establishes a foundation for viewing the data in the next phase, with an advance organizer that includes the features of the math assessment that seem important in shaping the data. Distinguishing between assumptions and predictions is essential for developing shared understandings and seeing new possibilities. Stating assumptions permits them to become the foundation for a productive dialogue about what appears in the data and the reasons that this may underlie them.

Tips for Success

- Distinguish between predictions and assumptions. What distinguishes predictions from assumptions is that predictions will be visible in the data

- Develop predictions and related assumptions concurrently. The group member who shares an assumption, should then generate a concrete prediction for how that assumption might appear in the data.

- Record predictions and their related assumptions. Use separate recording sheets or charts for this purpose.

- Record predictions on a facsimile of the data display. When possible, use a graph or chart that reflects the actual format of the data display. This recording sheet serves as an advanced organizer for viewing the data at the next phase.

- If group members do not agree on their predictions or assumptions, record more than one set of predictions and their related assumptions. The key function of dialogue at this stage is to seek to understand not to persuade. Group work bogs down when members struggle unnecessarily for consensus or engage in an assumptions debate.

Phase 2: Exploring and Discovering

Observing data skillfully requires thoughtful process, emotional control, and mental focus. Working with data should be a learning experience. To align with that intention, it is important to attend to careful structuring of the exploring and discovering phase. Purposeful uncertainty is the guiding mindset of this phase, which is the heart of collaborative inquiry. To embrace a spirit of exploration and discovery, groups must avoid jumping to premature conclusion and closure. To remain open to possibilities and fresh viewpoints, group members must stay with the data to explore multiple storylines. This is the phase of observing, noticing, distinguishing, sorting, comparing, and contrasting.

Whatever a group's size, exploring and discovering require data teams of four or five members, each team working with shared, visually clear data displays. Larger working groups and too much data at one time lead to overload, generalization, and disengagement. During this phase, both data enthusiasts and data shy have their own challenges. For inclusive collaborative inquiry, the data enthusiasts need to act as resources, refraining from dominating their groups and interpreting data for other members. The data shy need the confidence to ask what they fear might be obvious questions about the data or the displays.

Tips for Success

• Provide time to orient to the data displays before talking. Two to three minutes of silence equalizes the opportunity for each group member to prepare for exploring the data. This pause honors the different pacing and processing needs of individuals and produces more balanced engagement.

• Develop a sequence for exploration and designate a starting point. When multiple data sets or complex displays are on view, agreement on initial talking points saves time and energy and maximizes momentum and focus.

• Apply structures and protocols to balance participation. Deliberately structuring group work increases engagement, focus and time efficiency. For example, assigning roles, such as recorder, process checker, materials manager, and timekeeper or providing individual thinking and writing time before talking ensures access to information and opportunity to contribute for each group member.

• Establish a public recording protocol. Create common charts or recording space for observations. Keep a separate chart for questions or comments that are 'outside the phase'. For example, should conclusions or explanations surface, it is sometimes expedient to record them, rather than debate them. This process is also effective for questions that are not directly relevant to the data.

• Chart observations in language that is concise and specific. Each observation statement should communicate a single idea clearly and concisely. These statements should focus only on observable facts contained in the data without interpretation or inference. Relevant data terminology, such as mean, median, mode, range and distribution increases the precision of the observation.

Phase 3: Organizing and Integrating

Moving from observing to understanding and then to action planning requires skillful process in the organizing and integrating phase. This third phase of the collaborative learning cycle guides the transition to formal problem finding and solving as it builds a foundation for thoughtful and detailed planning processes. This phase takes place in two stages: causation and action. Group members need to be open to multiple interpretations as to why the data look the way they do, before developing any follow up plans. Most data sets do not tell a whole story. For any explanation of causal factors to be credible, the analysis must be thoughtful and based on multiple, rich sources of information. Therefore, this phase includes collecting and considering additional data that may be indicated by the theories of causation that emerge. Confirmation builds confidence and commitment to ultimate implementation plans. Multiple voices and perspectives serve the work in each stage of organizing and integrating.

Stage One: Causation. In this stage, groups generate potential theories of causation. "Why did we get these results? What caused these outcomes?" Often a group member's theory of causation is based on personal experience. For example, staff developers may tend to suggest teacher knowledge and skill as contributing factors, and workshops as a solution. Curriculum experts tend to suggest that the prime factor is lack of fidelity to the curriculum design that contributes to disappointing results. As groups extend the dialogue, surfacing a variety of causal theories, and confirming them with additional data, the deeper factors or root causes of the data emerge.

Confidence in any selected theory of causation increases when additional data sources confirm and elaborate the nuances of the theory. For example, a sixth grade team working with an expository writing assessment that reflects low student performance might decide on several causal theories to explore: (1) the writing instruction is not appropriately balanced between narrative and expository writing, (2) the reading instruction is not appropriately balanced between fiction and nonfiction genres, (3) the specific skills of vocabulary and word choice are underdeveloped, and (4) teachers lack instructional repertoire for teaching expository writing. A subset of teachers from the team could then gather further data to clarify or confirm each of these theories to refine and enrich the theory of causation that will drive the team's action planning.
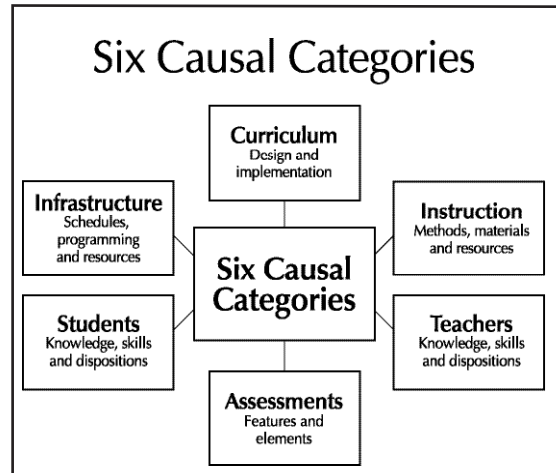
Stage Two: Action. Once an analysis of multiple data sources confirms a potential theory of causation, the team develops an action plan to address the cause(s). For example, "Now that we're pretty sure it's a balance between narrative and expository focus in reading and writing, let's develop some outcomes, instructional scaffolds, and resources that will represent a more suitable balance."

Effective plans call for clear outcomes, measureable criteria for progress and success, necessary action steps, data-driven monitoring arrangements for determining progress and goal achievement, assignment of responsibilities, and projected timelines.

Effectively implementing the Organizing and Integrating phase of the learning cycle builds ownership of challenges and shared commitment to actions. It increases motivation for change in practice and program. Collective responsibility for student learning is a hallmark of improving schools.

Tips for Success

• Study success. Select an observation from the previous phase that reflects successful performance, such as an improvement trend, a high-level skill that stands out on a rubric or benchmark assessment, or a spike on a bar graph for a particular group of students. Develop causal theories for what might have produced that success.

• Generate multiple theories of causation. Use the five causal arenas as categories for stretching thinking in generating diverse explanations for observable results. Groups should intentionally develop theories in more than one area.

Six Causal Categories

Curriculum
Design and implementation

Infrastructure
Schedules, programming and resources

Six Causal Categories

Instruction
Methods, materials and resources

Students
Knowledge, skills and dispositions

Teachers
Knowledge, skills and dispositions

Assessments
Features and elements

• Seek calibrating data that are in existing archives. Given time and energy constraints, it is useful to look first to archival data to confirm, correct or clarify causal theories.

• Generate multiple theories of solution. There are no simple answers for complex problems. Successful improvement plans require multiple intervention points and interrelated approaches.

• Make sure goals are clear and measureable. It is useful to provide guidelines and criteria for goal setting to ensure that everyone understands and is ready to engage in a shared pursuit of excellence. One effective model is based on SMART goals (O'Neill & Conzemius, 2006). Smart goals are Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Results-oriented and Timebound.
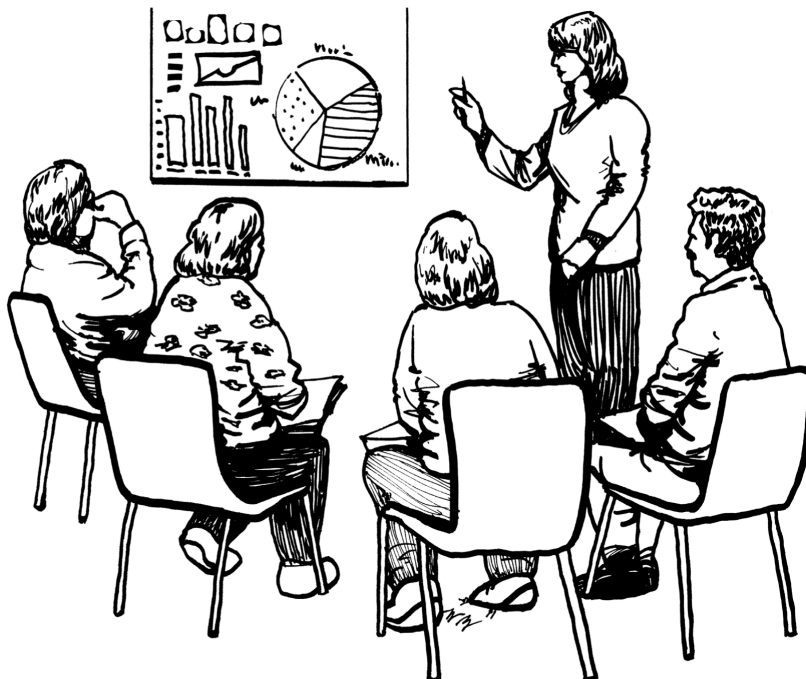
The Collaborative Learning Cycle

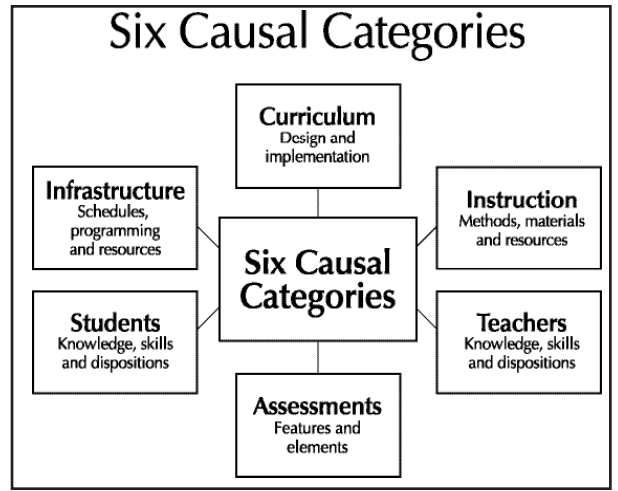*Use this page to record definitions and summaries for each phase of the cycle.*

Activating and Engaging

Exploring and Discovering

Organizing and Integrating

9

Theories of Causation

Six Causal Categories

Observation:

	Curriculum Design and implementation	
Infrastructure Schedules, programming and resources	Six Causal Categories	Instruction Methods, materials and resources
Students Knowledge, skills and dispositions		Teachers Knowledge, skills and dispositions
	Assessments Features and elements	

Use this space to record three possible theories of causation related to your observation:
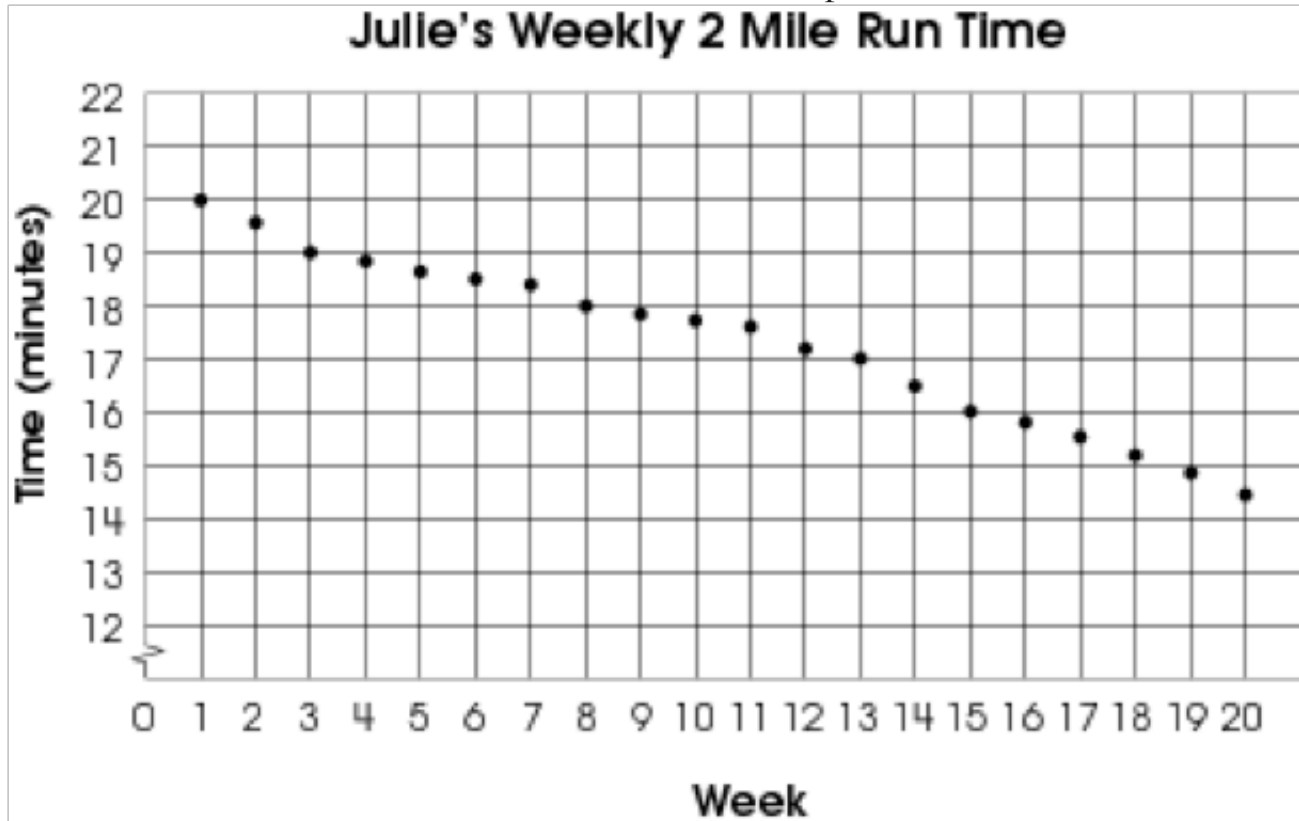
1.

2.

3.

Circle one theory to test. In the space below, record at least three sources of data that you could use to confirm this theory.

Grade 8: Math: Data Analysis and Probability: Question 2

Each Friday, Julie's track club runs two miles. The graph show the amount of time that it takes Julie to run the 2 miles each week over a period of 20 weeks.

Predict and record which percentage of Ohio 8th graders selected each answer and record the assumptions that inform your predictions on the following page.

Which answer describes the relationship between the number of weeks Julie practices and her running time?

A. Julie is running at a slower rate each week.

B. Julie decreases her time by about 20 seconds each week.

C. Julie decreases her time by about a minute each week.

**D. Julie is likely to run the 2 miles in 12 minutes during the 21st. week.**

Predictions & Assumptions

Your own

The group's

The Collaborative Learning Cycle, described in Chapter Three, employs three distinct modes of discourse: dialogue, discussion, and decision making. Each mode has its own purpose, tools, and ways of thinking (Lipton and Wellman, 2012).

Dialogue   **Discussion**   **Decision**
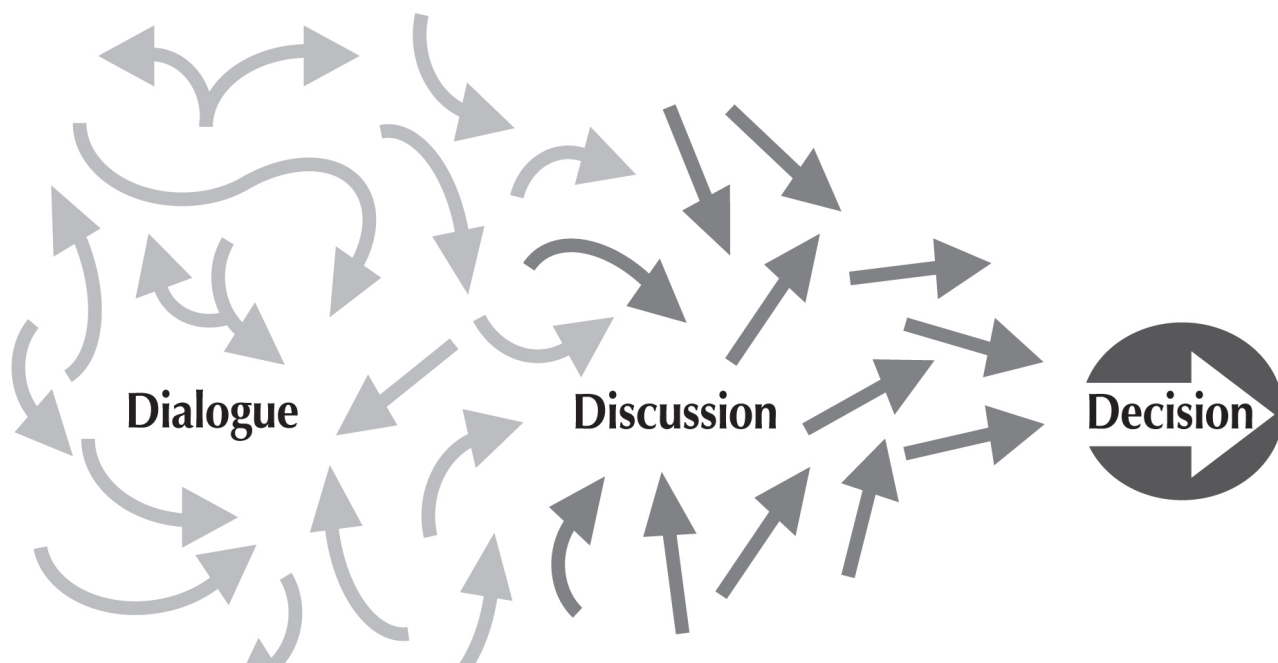
DIALOGUE

Dialogue promotes a spirit of inquiry within a group. The purpose is to generate multiple perspectives, encourage connection making between ideas and people, and develop shared understandings. With dialogue there is no need to influence or agree.

DISCUSSION

Discussion breaks issues and problems into components and parts. The purpose is to generate and analyze ideas, clarify the distinctions between these ideas, and define success criteria. In discussion, group members critique and advocate, sort, and prioritize.

DECISION MAKING

Decision making is choice making. The purpose is to weigh options against success criteria, select the most viable outcome, and set the scene for action planning. With decision making the team commits to one course of action.

Dialogue is one of the most ancient and least used forms of human communication. Our tribal ancestors gathered around their fires crafting community with stories, songs, and conversations. By learning the processes of dialogue we restore the patterns of our elders and embrace habits still practiced by indigenous peoples across the planet.

Many of these communications and thinking patterns were set aside during the development

of western culture as the early Greek philosophers and later European thinkers shaped language and listening models for logic, reason, and persuasion. These habits of mind molded our Western culture as we now know and experience it, producing the technological, social, and political structures that make us who we are today.

By embracing the processes and patterns of dialogue, we do not deny other ways of interacting. Dialogue is an important addition to individual and group repertoire. It extends personal and collaborative capabilities by supporting speaking and listening behaviors that link people and ideas. This collective search seeks connections, not fissures and wholes, not parts. At the most fundamental level, dialogue is a process of listening and speaking to understand one another's ideas, assumptions, beliefs, and values. To understand others does not imply agreement or disagreement with their viewpoints. Dialogue seeks and explores the layers of meaning within ideas.

The physicist, David Bohm, brought consciousness to dialogue in its more modern form, promoting it as an intentional communication process to develop deeper forms of collective thinking. He combined knowledge of quantum physics with understandings influenced by his work and association with the Indian philosopher, Jiddu Krishnamurti. Bohm sought patterns of thought in individuals and patterns of thought in society. From his studies with Krishnamurti, he learned the value of observing his own internal stream of consciousness and extended this to the

Bohm's work in turn influenced the work of William Isaacs, and his colleague Peter Senge, at the MIT Center for Organizational Learning. Isaacs (1999) calls dialogue a conversation with a center not sides. It requires a full commitment as a listener to understand others and a full commitment as a speaker to be understood by others. Like a magnetic field, the practice of dialogue gives a shape and structure to a spirit of sustained collective inquiry within and between people.

Within this container, we find the psychological safety to talk about the hard to talk about things that matter. To craft this container requires a blend of internal and external quiet so we can hear ourselves, hear others, and hear ourselves hear others. "Our conversations organize the processes and structures which shape our collective future" (Isaacs, 1999). This collective thinking, in itself, is a value and an outcome. Dialogue helps us to find connection and meaning within the noise. The process is also the product.

Skilled Discussion

Skilled discussion couples with skilled dialogue to support clarity of thought and commitment to action. For discussions to be productive, team members need to be clear about the purpose of their interaction. While both modes place data at the center, dialogue is about open exploration of ideas and perspectives, whereas skilled discussion seeks focus and closure on a set of criteria and options for decision making. Productive discussion depends on healthy habits of critical thinking to allow teams to sort and analyze data, information, and proposals and skillful application of language tools to support a climate of invitation, not opposition.

"Rather than data-driven decision making, it seems to me we need a culture of decision-driven data collection – the data are collected only after a clear theory of how they are to be used has been developed, to be certain they will be usable."

—Dylan Wiliam

DECISION MAKING

Decision making is not rational. At the point of decisions, some group members will need to forego choices that served their self-interest but no longer are viable in light of the data. Groups avoid decisions when members fear additional responsibilities or feel blamed by the data emerging from previous decisions. Other groups avoid decisions as a way of avoiding conflict, especially when they lack the tools and structures for productive group engagement. Preceding decision making with dialogue and productive discussion eases these emotional dilemmas.

Four Barriers to Effective Decision Making

The Need to Be Comfortable Decisions are harbingers of change. For group members who value the safety of the familiar, decisions that require new ways of operating, new responsibilities, and new learning create discomfort and sometimes stagnation. As a result, groups are reluctant to dig deep into root causes of problems and may then reject innovative solutions.

The Need to Be Liked   Decisions create alliances. To preserve relationships, some group members feel the need to hear every thought and respond to every question before deciding. For group members who need harmony, the fear of judgment or alienating colleagues by offering opposing thoughts keeps their participation to a minimum. This concern may be especially true for new team members or for those who value convivial relationships. As a result, their voice is lost.

The Need to Be Right Decisions create winners and losers. For some group members, the need to convince the group that their solution is the best one overcomes their ability to consider options presented by others. The need to control the discourse produces debate, monopolization, criticism, and elaborate arguments in support of their ideas. As a result, this low regard for collective thought processes consumes an undue amount of energy and time and often alienates other team members.

The Need to Have Closure Decisions require comfort with ambiguity. Decisions are always made with incomplete information. For some group members the need for closure drives them to pounce on the first plausible option. Driven by the discomfort of uncertainty, these individuals adopt a dictatorial stance or readily defer to those that do. As a result, groups limit exploration and the perseverance necessary for effective problem-framing and thoughtful decision making.

Benefits of Group Decision Making by Applying the Collaborative Learning Cycle

When decisions are made by groups, the quality and creativity increases because members offer multiple approaches, fill-in information gaps, generate more ideas, and evaluate them better than individuals. As a result of participation at the developmental stages of decision making, group decisions are better understood and more widely accepted.

The Collaborative Learning Cycle is ultimately an extended decision making process with the dialogue and discussion phases being a foundation for eliciting understanding, agreement, and commitment to targeted actions. Integrity of implementation and honoring the process and purpose of each phase addresses many of the issues created by the four barriers noted above.

Dialogue, Discussion, and Decision

| DIALOGUE	DISCUSSION	DECISION
Talking to understand and connect	Talking to persuade and influence	Talking to choose and commit
• thinking holistically	• thinking analytically	• thinking evaluatively
• making connections	• making distinctions	• making choices
• surfacing and inquiring into assumptions	• articulating and explaining assumptions	• testing assumptions against criteria
• developing shared meaning	• developing agreement on action	• developing commitment to action
• seeking understanding	• seeking viable alternatives	• seeking best option

GROUP MEMBER SELF-TALK

Productive group work emerges from the conscious internal dialogue of facilitators and group members. The table below describes effective self-talk for each mode of discourse.

Modes of Discourse — Self-Talk

DIALOGUE	DISCUSSION	DECISION MAKING
• What is the deeper meaning?	• What are the most important factors here?	• What is the weightiest item or criterion?
• What assumptions are operating here (for me and others)?	• How can I influence this interaction?	• Which criteria are most important?
• What are some connections between these ideas?	• Are these data persuasive enough for me to let go of my ideas?	• How do the options stack up against our criteria? own ideas?
• What's not being said?	• How are these ideas different from each other and from my	• What are the pros and cons for each option?
• Are we all feeling safe enough to share? How can I increase the invitation to share?	• What are the implications of this ideas?	• What are the implications?
		• Who will be most affected?

Based on your learning in this session what might you:

- Stop doing
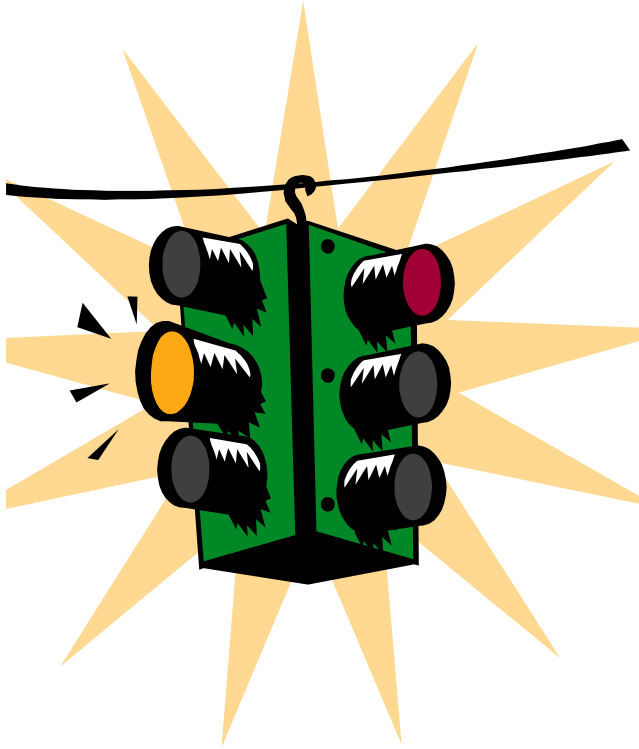
- Continue doing

- Start doing

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Producing Powerful Collaboratives: Seven Qualities of High Performing Groups

Producing Powerful Collaboratives:
Seven Qualities of High Performing Groups

Laura Lipton, Co-Director; MiraVia, LLC

P ARTNERSHIPS that are able to take collective action engage in rich collaboration about important issues. These groups share leadership, educators and community members working together to improve conditions within and outside of schools. This strong teamwork results in services for children and families that remove learning barriers and promote success for all.

The following seven qualities describe these high performing groups. A group is not a static thing. Groups develop, shaped by their continued shared experiences and the processing of these experiences. When and how group members choose to participate emerges from individual and collective awareness and commitment to developing these attributes.

Seven Qualities of High Performing Groups

- Maintain a clear focus
- Embrace a spirit of inquiry
- Put data at the center
- Honor commitments
- Cultivate relational trust
- Seek equity
- Assume collective responsibility

Maintain a clear focus

High performing groups clarify desired results and define success criteria. Less productive groups meander from topic to topic, often within overcrowded agendas. Such groups use a scatter shot approach, in which all items are treated with equal importance. High performing groups agree on and protect priorities for the group and the work at hand, preserving precious time for focused engagement about the things that matter.

By establishing clear and measurable goals and using success criteria to determine progress, these groups can work in the present while holding longer-term visions for improvement. These groups are willing to sustain focus for extended periods of time, not just rush for the quick fix. For example, targeting drop out rates, and reducing risk factors, such as substance abuse, delinquency or violence requires significant attention and innovation in intervention plans. The results of these changes for large cohorts of students may not appear in the short term, but will increase over time with ongoing monitoring and adjustments informed by data-driven conversations.

High performing groups manage and minimize distractions. Agreed upon structures and signals help with "digression management", particularly when time is short, energy is low and tasks are demanding. For example, prioritized and time-coded public agendas, based on agreed upon outcomes, with time monitoring, and shorthand language, such as "birdwalk alert" with permission to use it when digressions occur. In

these groups, members self-monitor, paying attention to themselves and each other, to gauge whether their contributions add to or detract from the group's focus. There is an agreement that maintaining focus is more important than any individual's desire to share an anecdote or elaboration.

Are your group's mission and goals clear to all?

What are some things that keep your group focused?

What are some ways you handle distractions?

Embrace a spirit of inquiry

By definition, inquiry is when you do not have a preferred response, or already know the answer. High performing groups ask genuine questions about their own processes and practices, as well as the issues they are exploring. They inquire. These groups often develop novel solutions to complex problems. Less productive groups avoid ambiguity, uncertainty and challenging questions, wrapping themselves in and drawing upon the comfort of their existing knowledge base and pushing for quick fixes.

High performing groups are both problem seekers and problem solvers. These groups seek external resources and data outside their own experience. Such groups consider an "and/both" approach, not "right/wrong" or "either/or" responses, skillfully engaging in conflict with ideas, not with one another. They inquire into data to identify, clarify and define the problem, seeking patterns and root causes before pursuing solutions and planning actions.

In these groups, members are willing to suspend their own judgments and opinions as they consider other perspectives. They are willing to delay jumping to solution. They push past surface ideas and avoid the comfort of quick conclusions, seeking external resources to extend their own knowledge base.

Discuss some of your group's target goals. Generate some "what if's", "why nots" and other novel questions that might support your work.

Put data at the center

High performing groups use data to inform and guide group work. These data focus and calibrate conversations. Less productive groups blur fact and opinion, occupying time with anecdote and argument. High performing groups tap multiple types and multiple sources of data to move their work forward. These groups keep data central to the conversation and make sure the data are available, visible and understood by everyone. They make data-driven decisions to determine target area, research interventions, and track and measure success.

For example, a partnership might target a specific area of well-being for students, such as academic achievement, bullying, obesity, nutrition, or substance abuse. In addition to information on academic performance, systematic examination of data, collected through public forums, surveys, additional school and community statistics and so on, provide measureable methods for revealing a fuller pictures and determining project success.

By exploring both formative and summative sources and using shared protocols and structures, these groups are able to depersonalize the data and use them as a catalyst for critical conversations about progress towards desired goals. With skillful inquiry and balanced participation they delve beneath the surface features of the data, persevering in the quest for deeper understandings.

What are some data sources tapped by your group?

How is data used to inform your progress – from goal setting, to progress monitoring to summative evaluation?

Honor commitments

High performing groups make their goals the focus of their conversations. They see themselves and all members as learners, and are willing to consider the limits of their own knowledge. Individual agendas are melded into the group's agreed upon agenda.
This essential disposition energizes the learning potential within the group, and extends to success for all students. Less productive groups have members that hold on to their own positions, often expounding on the virtues of their own perspectives, rather than consider the ideas of others.

High performing groups keep their focus on what is good for students, not just convenient for themselves. They are committed to supporting students inside and outside of schools. All members do more than volunteer – they are willing to lead initiatives, not just participate. They explore the process, performance and products of learning. They also assess and monitor their own learning, reflecting on their processes and products, and setting goals for continuous improvement.

What is most important to your group? How are the priorities selected and maintained?

Cultivate relational trust

High performing groups operate with high expectations and positive intentions as central assumptions. Within these groups, it is safe to display both high competence and vulnerability. In less productive groups, members fear attack or reprisal for things they might do or say, and are filled with doubt; having little or no faith that their colleagues will honor decisions or follow through on agreements. High performing groups rely on the integrity and competence of their members inside and outside of the meeting room. When it is safe not to know, team members don't feel the need to hide their shortcomings. They can count upon fellow group members' reliable and consistent application of agreements to the group process and to the work at hand.

In these groups, members say what they'll do and do what they said. They assume positive intentionality and believe in the good will of their colleagues. They understand the difference between a question and a critique. For this reason they are willing to be vulnerable and disclose both their successes and shortcomings, knowing that this information will not be exploited or belittled. They hold high expectations for themselves and each other and have faith that those expectations will be met and even exceeded.

On a scale of 1 to 10 (one is low), how would you rate relational trust in your group?

If you are 5 or greater: What are some things you do to build and sustain trust?

If you are 5 or less: What might you do to build and sustain trust?

Seek equity

High performing groups intentionally seek to balance participation. They are sensitive to perceived disparity between roles, experience, titles, etc. On this level playing field, they seek a diverse blend of voices and protect space for all to contribute. These groups seek external resources and recruit perspectives that might not be represented within the group. They reach out to multiple constituents. Less productive groups limit participation, allow dominance and restrict divergent thought, sealing themselves in the protection of their own logic.

High performing groups ensure reciprocity, foster interdependence and engage in productive collaboration. They apply structures to ensure that everyone has equal voice in the conversation as all strive for shared understanding. For example, creating smaller task groups that focus on large, shared

data displays, using round-robin protocols to balance participation and publicly charting so ideas belong to everyone provides equity of opportunity to join the conversation.

These groups operate from the assumption that everyone has something to offer. They seek to protect the minority voice. They monitor their own level of participation to be sure they are not dominating the conversation and make sure to encourage participation, especially from those who have not yet shared.

How balanced are your groups? (not very, somewhat, completely)

What voices are represented? What other resources might be important to recruit?

Assume collective responsibility

High performing groups make and honor agreements about who they want to be as a group and what they want to produce for the students and their families. They make data-driven choices and are willing to be answerable for those choices. This collective efficacy, or the shared belief that together the group will successfully achieve its goals, is a prime resource for sustained improvements in student learning. In less productive groups, members are protective of their autonomy in the meeting room and in the classroom. They are unwilling to see others' work as part of their own. They don't believe that group members' have the capability and willingness to make a difference.

Groups with high degrees of collective responsibility pursue challenging goals, exert concentrated effort and persist in collective action leading to improved success. In these groups, members believe in the power of the group to make a difference. They all take responsibility for fundraising, volunteerism, and for expressing a unified message. They recognize that their individual choices, both in the meeting room and outside of it, affect everyone. Thus, they willingly invest their time and energy, setting aside personal agendas to support the group's work and its development.

Share some aspect of your group work that requires and engages ALL members.