<u>GRACE</u>

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Session #2

The Role of Leadership Teams in Supporting the Cultural Shifts Needed to Become a True PLC

Assumptions About Learning

The Charles Darwin School

"We believe all kids can learn . . . based on their ability."

We believe that all students can learn, but the extent of their learning is determined by their innate ability or aptitude. This aptitude is relatively fixed, and as teachers we have little influence over the extent of student learning. It is our job to create multiple programs or tracks that address the different abilities of students and then guide students to the appropriate program. This ensures that students have access to the proper curriculum and an optimum opportunity to master material appropriate to their ability.

The Pontius Pilate School

"We believe all kids can learn . . . if they take advantage of the opportunity we give them to learn."

We believe that all students can learn if they elect to put forth the necessary effort. It is our job to provide all students with an opportunity to learn, and we fulfill our responsibility when we attempt to present lessons that are both clear and engaging. In the final analysis, however, while it is our job to teach, it is the student's job to learn. We should invite students to learn, but if they elect not to do so, we must hold them accountable for their decisions.

The Chicago Cub Fan School

"We believe all kids can learn . . . something, and we will help all students experience academic growth in a warm and nurturing environment."

We believe that all students can learn and that it is our responsibility to help all students demonstrate some growth as a result of their experience with us. The extent of the growth will be determined by a combination of the student's innate ability and effort. Although we have little impact on those factors, we can encourage all students to learn as much as possible and we can and will create an environment that fosters their sense of well-being and self-esteem.

The Henry Higgins School

"We believe all kids can learn . . . and we will work to help all students achieve high standards of learning."

We believe that all students can and must learn at relatively high levels of achievement. We are confident that students can master challenging academic material with our support and help. We establish standards all students are expected to achieve, and we continue to work with them until they have done so.

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SCHOOL CULTURE

1) **The Definition**: *"The assumptions, beliefs, values and habits that constitute the norm of the school and guide the work of the educators within it."*
   (DuFour, R., Learning by Doing, 2006)

2) **Healthy School Culture**: *"Educators have an unwavering belief in the ability of all of their students to achieve success, and they pass the belief on to others in overt and covert ways. Educators create policies and procedures and adopt practices that support their belief in the ability of every student."*
   (Deal, T., & Peterson, K., *Shaping School Culture*, 2nd Edition 2016)

3) **Toxic School Culture**: *"Educators believe that student success is based upon students' level of concern, attentiveness, prior knowledge, and willingness to comply with demands of the school, and they articulate that belief in overt and covert ways. Educators create policies and procedures and adopt practices that support their belief in the impossibility of the universal achievement."*
   (Deal, T., & Peterson, K., *Shaping School Culture*, 2nd Edition 2016)

4) **Non-Discussables**: *"Important matters that, as a profession, we seldom openly discuss. An issue of sufficient import that it commands our attention but is so incendiary that we cannot discuss it in polite society—at a faculty or PTA meeting."*
   (Barth, 2005)

THE PLAYERS

Believers: Educators who are predisposed to the ideas and programs that support the egalitarian idealism of education. They use and seek out the best professional models to support the universal achievement of their students.

Tweeners: Educators who are new to school culture. They typically are teachers who have just completed their education or certification or are new to a particular school. They do not belong to one of the other three categories yet, but will usually "choose sides" within two to five years. Their group is critical to school improvement because schools – especially high-risk schools – want to retain them. If schools do not retain qualified staff members, school reform is nearly impossible because long-term initiatives die out without organizational memory.

Survivors: Educators with one purpose: survival. Their group is made up of professionals who are simply "burned out" and are so overwhelmed by the demands of the profession that they suffer from depression and merely survive from day to day. Their group is much smaller than the other three, and there is a general consensus that their group needs more help than what is available in most schools and districts. They seek no alliances with other staff members and need the help of medical and psychological professionals to heal from the psychological effects of burnout.

Fundamentalists: Educators who are comfortable with the status quo and organize and work against any viable form of change. Their goal is to be left alone. They have many tools that they use to thwart reform initiatives, and without the proper leadership, they are generally successful in that subversion. They see their personal needs and goals as more important than the needs of the students and the organization as a whole.

The Will to Lead, The Skill to Teach, pg. 44-45, Anthony Muhammad

Simplifying RTI Culture Survey

Answer the following questions with the number scale.

1 = Never   2 = Seldom   3 = Sometimes   4 = Often   5 = Always, or almost always

Question	5	4	3	2	1
1. Our school supports and appreciates staff sharing new ideas.					
2. When something at our school is not working, our staff predict and prevent rather than react and repair.					
3. Our school schedule includes frequent collaboration opportunities for teachers as well as staff.					
4. Staff use team time to work as collaborative teams rather than as separate individuals.					
5. Our teams write norms or commitments that govern their work with each other, and they review and revise norms as needed.					
6. Our school enjoys a rich and robust tradition of rituals and celebrations that honor the work of teams as well as individuals.					
7. It is evident that learning for all is our core purpose as a school.					
8. Our staff believe that all students are capable of learning at high levels.					
9. Our staff believe that what we do can overcome the effects of poverty, language barriers, and poor parenting.					
10. Our staff believe that it is our responsibility to help all students become successful, even if the cause of challenges originates outside of school.					

The Four Disciplines Model:
1. Build a Cohesive Leadership Team
2. Create Clarity
3. Reinforce Clarity
4. Overcommunicate Clarity

ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

RESULTS

ACCOUNTABILITY

COMMITMENT

CONFLICT

TRUST

Lencioni, P., 2012, Adapted from *The Advantage,* Wiley & Sons
Do not duplicate

Figure 1.2: Leadership Competencies Evaluation Tool

Name of Staff Member _____

	Competency	Code	Notes
1	Challenges the status quo		
2	Builds trust through clear communications and expectations		
3	Creates a commonly owned plan for success		
4	Focuses on team over self		
5	Has a high sense of urgency for change and sustainable results		
6	Commits to continuous self-improvement		

Code Key: N = Not a strength; S = Slight strength; M = Moderate strength; E = Exceptional strength

Note: High-performance leaders do not excel in all of these competencies. However, they do exhibit strong skills and practices in almost all of the competencies. All strong leaders understand that they must continually improve, and they realize that they can never master all these competencies.

1) Procedural norms:

- Start on time and end on time.
- Be engaged.
- Come prepared.
- Be present: no cell phones, email, texting, and so on.

2) Behavioral norms:

- Focus on only those things we have control over.
- Talk about students as if their parents are in the room.
- Assume good intentions.
- Focus on solutions rather than problems.
- Use data and information to make decisions.
- No parking lot meetings. Discuss concerns at the meeting, not elsewhere.
- Respect the consensus of the group. Consensus means we will agree with the clear will of the group and enact the decision collectively after hearing each opinion and having a public *fist to five* vote (DuFour et al., 2016).

3) Accountability norms:

- The norm monitor designated for each team meeting (chosen on a rotating basis) signals any norm violations with team member input.

Steps for Establishing Team Norms

As a team, use the following five steps to establish behaviors for your team to operate under. These are the standards you must commit to accomplish your goals.

1. Discuss and agree on your team's purpose, goals, and desired products.

2. Post the question, "How do we need to work together in order to accomplish our goals?"

   a. Individually, brainstorm or record responses to "What do I need to do to ensure my team's success?"

   b. Underline the responses, and then individually brainstorm and record responses to "What do I need from my teammates in order to best contribute to my team's success?"

3. Collect and publicly record responses from all team members, beginning with individual needs and adding needs from others to complete the list.

4. Clarify, prioritize, and narrow the list to five to eight norms.

5. Reach consensus on the norms. Confirm commitment to norms from all members, and agree to give feedback.

6. Post norms, review them, and assess their use frequently. Modify as needed and agreed to.

LEADERSHIP TEAM: Clarity and Tasks
(School Improvement for ALL)

The Five Essential Elements in a PLC at Work (DuFour, R., 2016)

1. All teachers must work on a collaborative team. No one works in isolation.
2. Teachers implement a guaranteed and viable curriculum – a curriculum that contains the most important or essential knowledge and skills students need with time to learn them – on a unit-by-unit basis (Marzano, 2003)
3. Teams monitor student learning in an ongoing assessment process that includes team-developed common formative assessments.
4. Teams use the results of common assessments to improve individuals practice, build team capacity to achieve goals, and intervene in or extend student learning.
5. The school provides a system of teacher, team, and schoolwide interventions and extensions.

The PLC Tasks of the Leadership Team

- Build and support the school's mission of *learning for all.*
- Model the collaborative team process by using norms, agendas, meeting records, and so on.
- Create a master schedule that provides time for team collaboration, core instruction, intervention, and remediation.
- Coordinate staff and other resources to support core instruction and interventions.
- Articulate essential learning outcomes across grade levels and subjects.
- Ensure all students have access to grade-level or course-specific core instruction.
- Continually monitor schoolwide evidence of student learning.
- Support the work of collaborative grade-level and content teams.
- Problem solve school-improvement strategies to support increased student learning.
- Celebrate small wins along the journey with the entire staff.

Essential Tasks for an Effective Guided Coalition (RTI)

- Build consensus for the school's mission of collective responsibility.

- Create a master schedule that provides sufficient time for team collaboration, core instruction, supplemental interventions, and intensive interventions.

- Coordinate schoolwide human resources to best support core instruction and interventions, including the site counselor, psychologist, speech and language pathologist, special education teacher, librarian, health services staff, subject specialists, instructional aides, and another classified staff.

- Allocate the school's fiscal resources to best support core instruction and interventions, including school categorical funding.

- Assist with articulating essential learning outcomes across grade levels and subjects.

- Lead the school's universal screening efforts to identify students in need of Tier 3 intensive interventions before they fail.

- Lead the school's efforts at Tier 1 for schoolwide behavior expectations including attendance policies and awards and recognitions.

- Ensure all students have access to grade-level core instruction.

- Ensure that sufficient, effective resources are available to provide Tier 2 interventions for students in need of supplemental support in motivation, attendance, and behavior.

- Ensure that sufficient, effective resources are available to provide Tier 3 interventions for students in need of intensive support in the universal skills of reading, writing, number sense, English language, motivation, attendance, and behavior.

- Continually monitor schoolwide evidence of student learning.

The Leadership Team Process

1) Assess the current reality:

2) Provide a compelling case for change:

3) Create a doable plan:

4) Build staff consensus:

The Foundation of Anywhere High School

Our Mission: To help *all* of our students achieve the high levels of learning required for success in college or post-secondary training

Our Vision: The policies, programs, and practices of Anywhere High School reflect its commitment to helping all students learn at high levels.

As a Result of That Commitment:

- The staff constantly seeks out the most promising practices that support student learning.
- The school is characterized by a collaborative culture in which educators take collective responsibility for helping all students learn at high levels.
- The collaborative team is the fundamental structure of the school.
- Students are provided a guaranteed and viable curriculum, unit by unit.
- The learning of each student is monitored on an ongoing basis through daily formative assessment in the classroom and team-developed common formative assessment for each unit.
- The school has systems in place to ensure that evidence of student learning is used to—
    - Provide timely, diagnostic, and directive support for students who are struggling
    - Enrich and extend learning for students who demonstrate they are highly proficient
    - Inform individual educators regarding their strengths and weaknesses in helping students to learn at high levels
    - Alert a collaborative team to areas of concern in student learning that warrant the attention of the entire team
- The school supports educators' continuous learning and ongoing professional development.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents and provides parents with the information they need to monitor and support the learning of their children.

Our Collective Commitments: In order to fulfill our fundamental purpose and become the school we describe in our vision statement, each member of the staff commits to the following—

- I will be a positive, contributing member of my collaborative team.
- I will teach the essential learnings of our agreed-upon curriculum, unit by unit.
- I will monitor each student's learning on an ongoing basis through classroom and team-developed formative assessments.
- I will use evidence of student learning to inform and improve my practice and to better meet the needs of individual students.
- I will work with my colleagues to achieve our SMART goals.
- I will seek out the most promising practices to support student learning.
- I will keep parents informed of the progress of their children.

Our Schoolwide Goals: We will monitor the following indicators to mark our progress—

- Reduce the failure rate.
- Increase the percentage of students pursuing and being successful in the most rigorous curriculum in each program.
- Increase student achievement on local, state, and national high-stakes assessments.
- Increase the percentage of our graduates who experience success in postsecondary learning.

FACULTY MEETINGS: SCHOOL CULTURE TYPES

1) Collaborative School Culture faculty meetings:

This is the meeting that will challenge the thinking of all who are in attendance. There is a sharing of ideas – what works and what does not work, and why. It feels like action research is happening all the time. Teachers are taking notes, reflecting on what others are sharing. The shared stories affirm a vision that identifies the scope of relevant values and beliefs. All are driven by an intrinsic desire to see all students succeed.

2) Comfortable-Collaborative faculty meetings:

With this meeting, there is lots of laughter, celebrations, awards, comfort food, thanks, praise, and empathy. People tend to look forward to coming together and are not in a hurry to leave. Support staff are present and are acknowledged for their good work. The good teachers are comfortable and feel validated. Self-esteem and self-efficacy are strong. It feels more like a party than a meeting. There is little self-reflection.

3) Contrived-Collegial faculty meetings:

During this meeting, there is an official agenda with rules of order being followed, attendance is taken, and each department gives a report. Most new ideas are coming from the administration. The principal leads conversations about best practice with little concern for local confounding variables; "just do it." There is a feeling of stress on all teachers as the leader imposes a sense of urgency that feels more like panic. This meeting will not occur without the principal being there, and it is the principal who is leading all discussions.

4) Balkanized faculty meetings:

Teacher cliques are arriving together like teams coming onto the playing field, sitting together, whispering, and giggling at inside jokes. There is a competitive tone as members of cliques challenge other cliques to defend their opinions. There is an irrational defense of weak teachers when the conversation about improvement drift toward blame. In fact, the relationships forged among faculty members are more important than the school's mission. In this environment, veteran teachers seem to be running the meetings.

5) Fragmented faculty meetings:

At this meeting, most teachers are very quiet, and there is a calm sense of apathy. Some are grading papers, texting, or checking e-mails as the meeting progresses. There is a "let's get it over with" feeling. Most conversations are framed around house-keeping items. School improvement is a topic on the agenda with test scores, and as usual, it is the sole variable that defines improvement. In this setting, autonomy trumps collaboration.

6) Toxic faculty meetings:

In this setting, some teachers don't show up, new ideas are shot down quickly, and sarcasm & ridicule seem to be the primary tone with most discussions. There is an "Us vs. Them" mentality (teachers are "Us" and student/parents are "them"). There is a victim mentality that serves as an excuse to do nothing. Good teachers are uncomfortable and either regress to fit in or leave. Regarding conversations about improvement, toxic teachers want the school to improve, however, they define improvement as making their jobs easier. In this setting, we're not sure who is running the faculty meeting. The negativity of the meeting will extend into the parking lot and classrooms.

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Session #3

Singletons in a PLC

Advice for Singletons and Small Schools: Find Common Skills

Aaron Hansen

A thought occurred to me the other day while working with a group of singletons. "If I got to choose the questions that my singletons asked me, what would they be?"

Framing the Problem

What prompted my wonderings is that singletons almost always start with these questions:

- Who do I collaborate with?
- How do I create common assessments?

Most singletons get that common assessment is the linchpin of the PLC at Work™ process. They get that good common assessment practices are where the leverage is for better learning for students and adults. They usually feel that unless they can answer these questions meaningfully and completely, collaborating just doesn't make a lot of sense. You know what? They're right, it doesn't. These *are* meaningful questions … but they're not the questions I wish they were asking first.

Starting with a Different Question

Here's the question I wish I heard first:

- "What do we *really* want our students to learn?" In other words, what learning is going to matter most to our students?

True, this is the first PLC question. So, why does it resonate so desperately and deeply with me as a starting place as I work with singletons? The first reason is that many teams, singleton or not, are overly focused on learning content knowledge. S*kills* are more enduring for success. Tony Wagner, co-author of *Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era*, and expert in residence at the Harvard Innovation Lab, argues that knowledge is free and that transmission of knowledge only is obsolete. As Wagner points out, with information so readily available at our fingertips in an innovation economy, "it's not what you know, but what you can do with what you know" that matters! (Wagner, 2015)

Content knowledge on its own shouldn't be the goal. Instead, the 21st century skills are, in part:

- Can you ask questions?
- Can you sift through large amounts of informational text, determining what's credible and what's not?
- Can you use information from multiple sources in a creative way to synthesize a new claim and back up that claim using evidence from those texts?
- Do you have empathy for your audience so that you can communicate your ideas in a compelling way?

David Conley, professor and researcher at the University of Oregon, has written extensively about what it takes for students to be successful in the 21st century. He founded the Educational Policy Improvement Center, which explains, "Students need to do more than retain or apply information; they have to process and manipulate it, assemble and reassemble it, examine it, question it, look for patterns in it, organize it, and present it" (Conley, 2013).

I'm not saying content doesn't matter, but the 21st century skills described above, among others, are ultimately the learning that will matter most to students' future. Once teachers have made the shift in mindset from thinking collaboration has to be around common content to *skills that transcend content*, they are now ready to start talking about whom to collaborate with and how to create common assessments.

Once teachers have identified skills that really matter, the skills that transcend content, they are ready to find partners.

My book, *How to Develop PLCs for Singletons and Small Schools*, identifies several structures for singletons to be involved in the PLC process, two of which are *vertical teams* and *interdisciplinary teams*. Let's use these to explore how teams could focus on essential skills, even if the content or grade levels are not the same.

1. **Vertical Teams:** These are teachers who all teach the same subject but at different grade levels.
2. **Interdisciplinary Teams:** As the name implies, these teams are made up of teachers who all teach different subjects.

A typical interdisciplinary team might be a high school social studies team. One teacher might teach US history, while another teaches world history, while another teaches government, while another teaches economics. The content of each is different, right? However, what skills do they have in common? Let's say, for example, the team decided that they wanted to focus on the applicable 21st century

skill of making and defending an argument. They could start by creating written models of what it actually looks like when a student performs that skill proficiently, what it looks like when students are approaching proficiency, and when student work is above proficiency. From there, they could create a rubric, describing why those models are quality work. Using the same rubric, they could set expectations based on grade level. "Here's what your work needs to look like as a sophomore. Here's what your work needs to look like as a senior." The team could gather information (data) about the progress of each of their students. By focusing on the data, this team can improve their teaching. They can learn from each other the most promising strategies for teaching this very important skill. They can also use the data to respond to and improve student learning. In other words, they can follow the PLC processes, collaborating around skills that matter for student success.

What about elementary schools? A small elementary school with only one teacher per grade level could form vertical teams to focus on any number of literacy skills. Following the pattern described above, let's say that a kindergarten, first-grade, and second-grade teacher formed a vertical team to focus on sentence writing. Although the expectation for proficiency is different at each grade level, the skill is the same. The team could share common rubrics, models of student work, and teaching strategies, and develop powerful intervention plans based on need, regardless of grade level.

What about science or math? Science teams might choose a skill like using the scientific method to solve problems or make a hypothesis. Despite using different content as the vehicle for teaching such enduring skills, they can have rich collaboration. Math teams can focus on problem solving, developing common rubrics for approaching real-world problems regardless of the level of math being applied.

Music teachers can focus on essential components to effective performance or musicality, regardless of instrument or genre. A school-to-careers team might focus on the essential skills of being employable. They could clarify what employability skills really are and deliberately teach those with the same intentionality a traditional PLC team teaches their content.

The list goes on. The point is, finding a structure and a way to create common assessments becomes far less challenging when you start by asking the right questions. What do you want kids to learn—*really*? By focusing on skills that transcend content, you will be surprised by how much you really do have in common and how much it really does matter.

Continuum for Implementing a Singleton Collaborative Team

As you form your team, use the following continuum as a guide to think through some of the steps you'll need to take. The goal is to achieve the level of collaboration at the bottom of the continuum.

▸ Establish a team (vertical, interdisciplinary, or virtual), or change structures so that you are no longer a singleton.

▸ Establish a time to meet.

▸ Identify target skills or content worthy of your attention. If improved, these skills will make an important difference for students.

▸ Develop a means for assessment (often through the use of a common rubric).

▸ Establish inter-rater reliability and develop an assessment schedule.

▸ Establish SMART goals.

▸ Determine some best-practice strategies for initial instruction.

▸ Administer common assessments with an agreed method for grading and reporting the data.

▸ Disaggregate data gathered from common formative assessments.

▸ Decide on individual and collective responses to fundamental questions 3 and 4 of the PLC process.

☆ I wrote some letters or words.

☆☆ I wrote a simple sentence with a noun and a verb.

☆☆☆ My sentence has a noun, a verb, and correct capitalization, spacing, and a punctuation mark.

☆☆☆☆ My sentence is about one topic using a noun, a verb, and an adjective or elaboration. I used a capital letter, spacing, and punctuation.

☆☆☆☆☆ My sentence is about one topic, using a noun, a verb, and an adjective. I used a capital letter, spacing, and punctuation. I used correct grammar, including tenses, pronouns, and so on.

For example, an elementary school might vertically examine the Common Core Writing strand using the following five steps (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a).

1. **Preparation:** The school first determines the focus standard of the vertical progression. For example, it may select anchor standard one for writing: "Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence" (CCRA.W.1). This anchor standard defines the end in mind for students to be prepared in the area of writing to the point that they are ready to succeed in college and workforce training programs. Each grade-level set of standards in writing progressively contributes to the accomplishment of this anchor standard. So, as part of this activity, each grade-level or course team would plan to examine its grade-specific standards that make up the progression to that anchor standard, as follows.

   > Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (such as *My favorite book is . . .*). (W.K.1)
   >
   > Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure. (W.1.1)
   >
   > Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (such as *because*, *and*, *also*) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section. (W.2.1)
   >
   > Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. (W.3.1)
   >
   > Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.4.1)
   >
   > Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. (W.5.1)

   In this example, a fifth-grade team would examine standard W.5.1, the sixth grade team would examine W.6.1, and so on.

2. **Grade-level unwrapping:** To examine the learning targets for its students, each grade-level team unwraps its corresponding standard, using poster paper as a template to indicate the learning targets and academic language related to its particular standard.

3. **Round 1 poster walk:** Each team participating in the activity then walks around viewing the posters that each grade level displays. We suggest having each grade-level team start at the grade level that comes *after* its grade since teachers will be preparing students for the next level of learning. In other words, they will see their role in establishing a strong foundation for the next grade-level learning. Using sticky notes, teachers can point out significant shifts in the expectations they see in the unwrapped standards, ask questions about something they've seen, or suggest additions to the learning targets. See figure 2.5 for a sample of what a fifth-grade team's poster with unwrapped targets might look like.

4. **Round 2 poster walk:** In a second round, grade-level team members should go to the poster of the grade level *preceding* theirs to make special notations on specific learning targets that would be crucial to master. For example, the fifth-grade team could closely examine the fourth-grade

poster and place an asterisk by the skills that teachers feel would enable students to hit the ground running when they transition to fifth grade.

5. **Learning reflection:** After some talk time, each grade-level or course team takes turns reporting its learning from the vertical experience to the rest of the teams, sharing any patterns they might have seen as the standards progressed from grade to grade, any potential implications for their instruction and assessment based on this new knowledge, and specific actions they will take. The entire group collectively charts a summary of actions.

Grade 5 Standard: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. (W.5.1)	
What do we want students to know?	• Know that the purpose of an opinion piece is to express a point of view but support that point of view with reasons and opinion • Know that logical arguments are based on facts that support the author's opinion
What do we want students to do?	• Establish their opinion statement • Identify specific and relevant reasons that support their opinion • Identify potential opposing viewpoints • Group and order the information in a logical way for writing • Compose a written opinion
What academic language will be emphasized?	• Argument • Opinion • Perspective • Persuasive technique • Point of view

Figure 2.5: Sample unwrapped targets for a grade 5 standard.

Schools can hold other vertical conversations that focus on a number of topics, including:

- Expectations for writing quality
- Text-complexity examples by grade level
- Lab report expectations
- Standards for Mathematical Practice

We strongly encourage schoolwide vertical conversations such as these to deepen teams' understanding of the standards' intent, prioritize essential learning targets and academic language that students will master, and establish collective responsibility for students' attainment of the progression of skills during learning.

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Four Digital Resources for Electronic Learning Teams

There are new digital tools that can facilitate progress-driven work around any collaborative task. This collection of four useful resources may help get your electronic learning team off of the ground.

Conducting Synchronous Meetings

Like more traditional teams, electronic learning teams should be engaging in regularly scheduled synchronous meetings that are focused on the kinds of instructional practices that have a positive impact on student learning.

1. Google Hangouts

While at first glance it may appear to be a nontraditional option for educators, Google+ Hangouts (www.google.com/+/learnmore/hangouts/) is probably the best tool for electronic teams trying to schedule synchronous meetings simply because it (1) allows up to nine people to join a conversation at one time, (2) allows participants to share their screens and collaborate around shared documents, and (3) is completely free. Synchronous meetings held in Google+ Hangouts can also be easily recorded and posted online for future reference.

Creating Shared Documents

Regardless of how they are structured, professional learning teams generate a ton of shared documents: common assessments, sets of essential outcomes, potential lessons, and exemplars of student work, for example. For electronic learning teams, services that allow members to work—synchronously or asynchronously—on these kinds of documents are essential.

2. Google Drive

Google Drive (http://drive.google.com) is a service that allows groups of users to collaborate around word documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and forms in online spaces. Edits appear automatically, making it possible for team members to work simultaneously on the same document. Teams can then download final products in more traditional formats—Word documents, PDF files, PowerPoint presentations—or post them directly to the web.

Warehousing Team Content

The most efficient learning teams develop systems, structures, and spaces for storing their shared content. When resources are carefully organized and readily available to members, learning teams thrive.

3. PB Works

PBworks (https://plans.pbworks.com/academic) is a wiki service that offers free basic accounts to educators. *Wikis*—easy-to-edit websites—are a fantastic solution for electronic learning teams looking to create warehouses of shared content because they require little digital skill to master. As long as members can create basic documents and add attachments to emails, they can edit a team wiki.

Tackling Multiple Tasks

For many electronic learning teams, a priority in selecting digital tools is finding services that address multiple collaborative tasks at one time. These all-in-one homes are valuable primarily because they provide many electronic opportunities with a single password.

4. Edmodo

Edmodo (www.edmodo.com), a popular free service that has been widely embraced by educators, offers users the ability to carry on asynchronous conversations, conduct group polls, maintain a shared calendar, and create warehouses of team documents. While Edmodo doesn't offer synchronous conversation or shared document creation options, it's popular with educators who often begin using the service to create online homes for their students, too.

World Cafe: Collaborative Dialogue Protocol

June 21, 2018

THE WORLD CAFÉ PROTOCOL

1. Seat 4-6 people in a group for a conversation.

2. There will be three rounds of conversation, approximately 15 minutes per round.

3. Each table needs to choose a "table host." The "table host" will remain at that table all three rounds. The "table host" will record the major discussion points on large chart paper for each round. At the start of each new round, the "table host" will summarize the key points, ideas and themes for each new group.

4. At the conclusion of each round, the participants will travel to a different table (once again in groups no larger than 4-6 participants).

5. Share-out findings for the entire group.

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