Strategies of Effective Teams and their Impact on English Language Learners

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NYC-RBE-RN @ Fordham University
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Latino Caucus Professional Day
High School of Mathematics, Science and Engineering
Objective and Learning Outcomes

Can Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) make a lasting impact on the continued progress of English Language Learners? If so, How do these collaborative teams work? What are their tools?

1. Necessary Conditions - Structures and Systems
2. Analysis and use of data - Data-Driven Protocol
3. Differentiation Strategies, Implementation and Management
4. How effective teams work
5. Impact on school culture
Data & Focus on Learning

- Demographics
- Assessments
- Observations
- Attitudes
- Print environment
- Experiences
- Attendance
- State Tests
- Tests
School Structures and Systems: Enable Coherence at Classroom, Teams & School Levels

- Shared vision, unified focus
- Trust, respect and openness to improve one’s teaching practice.
- Organizational support & distributive leadership
- Commitment of all members to follow up and implement the decisions made at meetings.
Data-Driven Dialogue Protocol

1. PREDICT: “I predict”

2. VISUALIZE - “I see” -

3. OBSERVE - “I notice” -

4. COLLABORATE “I think”, “I suggest”
To begin the conversation:

*How did the target students, e.g. 6th graders do on the NYSESLAT test?*

*ELA test? Math test?*

*Baseline, unit assessments?*

1. **PREDICT:**
   “I predict”

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**Make note of it:**

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<th><strong>DDI: DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHEET</strong></th>
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**NEXT STEPS (Differentiated Instruction – include Strategies)**
2. VISUALIZE
-"I see"-

English Language Arts – Students at Levels 3 & 4

School wide results: How does the conversation change?
NYSESLAT results: How does the additional student specific data help shape your conversation?

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3. OBSERVE - “I notice” -

**Reading Standards for Informational Text 6-12**

This section highlights the reading standards for informational text in grades 6-12, focusing on how students should analyze and evaluate the content of texts.

- **Grades 9-10 students:**
  - Identify the main ideas and details of a text.
  - Analyze the development of ideas and argue for or against certain positions.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the structure of the text.
  - Synthesize the information from the text and integrate it with personal knowledge.

- **Grades 11-12 students:**
  - Analyze the role of the author's point of view and bias in the text.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the structure and the overall coherence of the text.
  - Synthesize the information from the text and integrate it with personal knowledge.
  - Analyze the role of the author's point of view and bias in the text.
4. COLLABORATE
“I think”, “I suggest”

“I think, the students’ strengths are: [WHAT], and to achieve the benchmark set for Unit 2, they need to practice [WHAT]”

DDI: DATA ANALYSIS WORKSHEET

“I PREDICT” | “I SEE” | “I NOTICE” | “I THINK, I SUGGEST”

NEXT STEPS (Differentiated Instruction – include Strategies)

“We have identified [WHAT], now we need to determine [HOW] the learning tool that will enable help them to achieve the unit 2 benchmark?”
1. **PREDICT**: In preparation for an informal classroom visit, you have a copy of the lesson and review it (handout #1):

   What do you expect the students will learn? How do you predict (your target) ELL students will display their learning process?

2. **VISUALIZE** As you walk into the classroom, you see what the teacher and the students are doing, What do their behaviors tell you? How do your predictions change? What’s your evidence?

3. **OBSERVE** (handout #2) Listen for the type of questions, scaffolds the teachers is using and the answers of the students, particularly your target ELLs. Pay close attention to the task and the learning process of the students. Talk to them. *How are the students articulating what they are learning, and how they are learning it? How are they articulating their progress?*

4. **COLLABORATE** Share your observations with the members of the group: Use your evidence to discuss strengths and areas of need. *What would be the team’s suggestions? Next steps (include follow up)?*
1. PREDICT: In preparation for an informal classroom visit, you have a copy of the lesson and review it:

- What do you expect the students will learn?
- How do you predict (your target) ELL students will display their learning process?

Use Handout #1 – Lesson Plan
2. VISUALIZE
As you walk into the classroom, you see what the teacher and students are doing,

What do their behaviors tell you?
How do your predictions change? What's your evidence?

See Next Slide: Choose ONE Scenario
3. OBSERVE

Listen for the type of questions, scaffolds the teachers is using and the answers of the students, particularly your target ELLs.

Pay close attention to the task and the learning process of the students.

Talk to them. *How are the students articulating what they are learning, and how they are learning it? How are they articulating their progress?*

Use Scenario: Role Play with Team Members

Use Observation Protocol as a guide, Handout #2)
4. COLLABORATE

Share your observations with the members of the group: Use your evidence to discuss strengths and areas of need.

What would be the team’s suggestions?
Next steps (include follow up)?

Use ALL your Notes and Evidence
How Do Effective Teams Work?
Collaborative Team Process

After considering the NYSESLAT data we analyzed, the school identified the lowest 1/3 group as target. The goal of each of the teams was to boost non-fiction writing in targeted ELL students.

To that purpose, the teams set a calendar to meet regular to follow the progress of the students based on selected strategies.
Implementation steps towards Accelerating Student Learning and Achieving School-wide Goals

- 2008 State Tests
  - June Predictive
- Progress Report
- Oct. Predictive
- ITAs
- Quality Review
- 2009 State Tests
  - ITAs
  - June Predictive

Cycle 1: Baseline Assessment
- Short-term Goal #1: Change Strategy #1 and Implementation plan

Benchmark 1: Document Evidence of effectiveness of Strategy #1
- Cycle 2: Short-term Goal #2: Change Strategy w. Im. plan

Assessment of Student Progress Towards June Goal

[Repeat Cycles: Address Short-term Goals, Identify Change Strategies, Implement & Document Progress]

June Assessment

Inquiry Team Process
When Heaven and Earth Changed Places is a memoir by LeLy Hayslip about her childhood during the Vietnam War, her escape to the United States, and her return to visit Vietnam 16 years later.

At every meeting, the teams would follow the Data-Driven Protocol using BOTH the task and student work.

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Inquiry Team outcomes:
Students’ most successful strategies

1. R.A.F.T.
2. Evidence-Based Organizer
3. Cornell notes, with support

R.A.F.T.S.
is an acronym for:

R - Role of the writer--helps the writer decide on point of view and voice.

A - Audience for the piece of writing--reminds the writer that he/she must communicate ideas to someone else; helps the writer determine content and style.

F - Format of the material--helps the writer organize ideas and employ format conventions for letters, interviews, story problems, and other kinds of writing.

T - Topic or subject of the piece of writing--helps the writer to zero in on main ideas and narrow the focus of the writing.

S - Strong verb--directs the writer to the writing purpose, for example to persuade, analyze, create, predict, compare, defend, or evaluate, and thus direct the "action" of the writing.

Example:
Role: Kidney
Audience: Your host/body
Format: Letter
Topic: What you need to stay healthy; why your host would be better off
Strong Verb: Explain
## Organizer to Identify and Write Based on Evidence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Text</th>
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</table>

### CLAIM:

### Point 1
- A  Supporting Evidence
- B  Supporting Evidence
- C  Supporting Evidence

### Point 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINDING DETAILS</th>
<th>Detail 1 (Ref.: )</th>
<th>Detail 2 (Ref.: )</th>
<th>Detail 3 (Ref.: )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I find interesting details that are related and that stand out to me from reading the text closely.</td>
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</table>

### CONNECTING THE DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I think about detail 1:</th>
<th>What I think about detail 2:</th>
<th>What I think about detail 3:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I re-read and think about the details, and explain the connections I find among them.</td>
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### MAKING A CLAIM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My claim about the text:</th>
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<tr>
<td>I state a conclusion that I have come to and can support with evidence from the text after reading and thinking about it closely.</td>
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The Cornell Method

Notes
This is the section where you should take your notes during the course of the lecture. Use bullets, sentences, short-hand, etc.

Cues
Questions, main points, visual clues, and other clues that jog your memory go here. Fill this section in after class.

Summary
Most important points and main ideas go here. Fill in this section after class when you are in the reviewing process.
In June, the members of the three inquiry Teams prepared and delivered training on their work and results.

During the professional development, teachers had the opportunity to practice and discuss the strategies so that they can be implemented school wide.
"Two years ago, we began re-organizing the school into teams that come together with a focus…"

"To organize the school into PLCs is not easy and it is expensive. You begin by creating meeting times around teachers’ prep schedule, but this is not always possible and you have to be ready with appropriate cover. [...] The formation of teams based on purpose enables teachers who otherwise would never see each other to become strong partners toward the improvement of their craft."
Encouragement and advice can be good motivators, but feedback is the only key that can motivate and also guide the student to take the next and make the extra effort to accomplish a difficult task.

Feedback is:
1. Goal–Oriented
2. Tangible and Transparent
3. Actionable
4. User-Friendly
5. Timely
6. On-going
7. Consistent

Levels of Feedback:
1. Task Feedback
2. Process Feedback
3. Self-Regulation
   (student use of checklist and rubrics)
What is true Feedback for Learning?

- Feedback is not Advice
- Feedback is not Praise
- Feedback is not Evaluation
- Feedback is not a grade
- Feedback is not a reproach

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ACADEMIC LANGUAGE IS MORE COMPLEX THAN ACADEMIC VOCABULARY!!!
Calendar: Regular PLC meetings to Analyze Student Work alternating with Study Group sessions on ‘Checking for Understanding and Effective Feedback’

How is the student showing understanding? How do I provide feedback to support his/her next step towards completing task? Meeting learning objective? Benchmark?
Facilitator: Ms. C. How useful were the group’s recommendations? Ms. C offers examples on how she implemented the group’s suggestions and overall student improvements.

Teacher (Science) presenter shares:
Task and rubrics – “Write a story pretending that you’re a rock”
Student written work: One sample written in Spanish and another in English
Teacher explains: She has attempted to integrate language development and science content, and is seeking feedback and suggestions to improve her craft.

Guided by the Facilitator, the group analyses the data (student work, task, rubrics), discusses noticings – identify strengths, weaknesses, share wonderings and decide on recommendations. The group provides examples for possible Language Objectives and suggestions to edit the rubric so that it also incorporates criteria pertaining to Language Functions and Grammar.

Facilitator: Thanks the group and meeting is adjourned.

Teacher presenter responds to suggestions and thanks the team.
T.E.L.L. Feedback Strategy

- **Tell** the student about the exact behavior; be objective.
- **Explain** what outcomes may result from the actions; do not blame. Use ‘I’ statements.
- **Listen** to ideas for improvements, ‘buy-in”; come to agreement.
- **Let the** student know positive or negative consequences if situation is not corrected.

Examples:

“The point of this writing task is to practice writing humor, you want to make readers laugh. So, you may want to get feedback from peers; ask, How funny is this? Where might it be funnier?”

“This is a weak needs some work. Read with me: almost from the first sentence its confusing, there is no clear thesis statement. In the second paragraph…, and in the third paragraph you don’t offer evidence, just opinions”
School wide Impact:

At JHS 145, the Inquiry Teams have worked hard, smart and consistently throughout the school year. Their collaboratively inquiry has focused on improving the academic language and the ability of English language learners to identify and use textual evidence in reading and writing across content areas.

The inquiry process began with an analysis of the students' performance on the 2012 NYSEELAT. There was substantial evidence of a learning gap in analytical writing. Thus, the school opted to target this particular type of writing focusing on ELLs with an Intermediate and an Advanced level of English proficiency.

The school administration, Mr. Hannibal, Principal, Ms. Gonzalez and Mr. McIntosh, Assistant Principals supported the work by ensuring a regular meeting time during the day (1 period/every two weeks). The three grade level teams focused on two ELLs: English, Science, Social Studies, Mathematics and Special education teachers have proactively implemented, documented, shared and discussed the progress of their students at each of these meetings. In the process, they have identified four strategies that effectively support English language learners develop, build and/or extend their ability to use textual evidence orally and in written work. These strategies are:

1. A Tic/Tac/Toe organizer that guides students in the identification and use of relevant evidence when writing an argument.

2. A version of Think-Pair-Share that includes a Written Conversation strategy.

3. The RAFT protocol, which brings the role of writer (R) to the forefront as it prompts students to consider the audience (A), the format (F) as well as the topic (T), and 4. A variation of the Cornell Note-Taking protocol that encourages students to include key words and notations in their first language, drawings and rebuses in the “cues” column to help them clarify, understand and retain the notes they took in class (right column), which are often written in imperfect English.

On June 6, the Inquiry Team members guided their colleagues in the implementation of these strategies in an engaging three-hour professional development session. The faculty at JHS 145 applauded their colleagues for their work and for sharing strategies that will benefit not only the ELL students in their classrooms, but students schoolwide.
The primary objective of the NYC RBE RN at Fordham University Graduate School of Education and the Center for Educational Partnerships is to assist schools, networks, and school districts across all five boroughs in creating professional learning communities centered on the education of English Language Learners (ELLs). To that purpose, the NYC RBE-RN team has been supporting and collaborating with many schools towards this common endeavor. We are proud to share a small conversation with Delise Jones, Principal of IS 117.

A Conversation with Delise Jones, Principal of IS 117

Professional Learning Communities: Improving the Practice, Improving the Learning
by Rosier Salavert, Ed.D.
NYC RBE-RN@Fordham University

The Joseph H. Wade school—IS 117 in the Bronx—is buzzing with activity; it is a school on the move to bigger and better things. The reorganization of teachers into Professional Learning Communities is giving this experienced staff multiple opportunities to share their knowledge with a clear focus on improving student learning. Their work and the collective energy make the school a vibrant community for all. During our conversation, Ms. Jones outlined the how, the why and the what of PLCs and the evidence that she is gathering daily to demonstrate the impact of this collective action in the classroom and on the student work.

What prompted you to organize your faculty into Professional Learning Communities or PLCs? Our priority is to help the children, but I realized that to support students, teachers had to communicate otherwise they were working against each other’s work. Two years ago we began re-organizing the school into teams that come together with a focus, use a set protocol and have collegial conversations about student work, their own practice, and conversations on how to plan and the execute these plans.

How do you organize these teams? What structures do they require? To organize the school into PLCs is not easy and it is expensive. You begin by creating meeting times around teachers’ prep schedules but this is not always possible and you have to be ready with appropriate lesson in my school. We are at formative teams based on purpose and not necessarily based on grade or subject. The formation of teams based on purpose enables teachers who otherwise would never see each other to become strong partners toward the improvement of their craft. It’s a school that has young and motivated teachers perhaps these teachers are enrolled to meet on their own but this is not the case in my school. We have an experienced staff who used to work on their own and the only way we can break the isolation cycle is by facilitating their active participation in regular PLCs. It is definitely a worthy investment.

What do you expect from these teams? I expect that these teams will work in a focus and in a collegial atmosphere. And I like when teams use protocols to guide their conversations. One of the protocols, for example, helps teachers analyze written work and identify strategies and scaffolds to improve their craft and thus advance student performance. I also expect that teachers will review tasks and units towards developing effective lessons and formative assessments.

Conversations in a structured setting are a new practice for many of our members and come may sit quietly, particularly in the beginning. On the other hand, they are all exposed to the idea and the conversation of others to their benefits, and most importantly to the benefit of their students.

Continues on page 4
Session Core Question:

Can Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) make a lasting impact on the continued progress of English Language Learners? 
If so, How do these collaborative teams work? What are their tools?

- There is trust and genuine interest in improving teaching practices
- There are is a clear collective focus on learning objectives that respond to high expectations for English Language Learners
- Collaboration across all groups including collaboration among students
- School leaders with a collaborative shared vision that leads to structures and systems that provide opportunities for distributive leadership and support all students.
The conversation of collaborative Teacher Teams/ PLCs focuses on a small group of students.

But, their work inspires the entire faculty and help create an environment where teachers’ ability to work collaboratively builds the capacity to effectively support the progress of ELL students.

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Group Reflection

• What are some ideas discussed today that square with my beliefs and practices?

• What are some new ideas rolling around in my head?

• What are some concrete steps that I will take as a result of this session?

Thank you, Roser