

TOOL KIT: TO SUPPORT A LEARNING COMMUNITY

A Professional Learning Community engaged in action research needs tools that make practitioner research visible to the practitioner and his/her community for the purposes of feedback, revision and reflection. The following tools support a PLC:

ACTION PLAN

Change in practice needs to be planned, scheduled and made visible to the community. This Action Plan documents the Who, What, Why, How and When of the practitioner research and identifies the evidence that will be shared at the PLC meetings and intervisitations.

REFLECTION PROTOCOL

This document captures the results of the practitioner's Action Plan and identifies what was effective, what needs to be revised, and what was the impact on student learning and on teacher practice.

INTERVISITATIONS

Intervisitations are essential to building a learning community. A learning community only prospers when a safe space that promotes both respect and risk-taking is established. The use of protocols is vital to ensuring this environment. Artful Learning Communities utilized the following protocols during intervisitations:

- OBSERVATION PROTOCOL**

The protocol focuses the observers on formative assessment and student learning. It provides documentation for the observers' feedback. Prior to the observation, the practitioner being observed sets the lens by stating what in the lesson she/he wants to receive feedback on.

- FEEDBACK PROTOCOLS**

Feedback is often a sensitive issue in building community. These protocols promote a safe space and utilize language that supports the practitioner in developing his/her work. Feedback *always starts* with recognition of what was of value in the observed lesson.

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Suggestions for the Action Plan & Reflection Process

WHO: Focus on one class and/or a specific group of students.

WHAT: Come up with a formative assessment strategy you want to put into practice. Select one or more strategies connected to the feedback loop. For example:

- Provide clear criteria
- Generate criteria with students
- Use the criteria to focus feedback
- Use the criteria to focus student revision
- Implement a protocol for peer feedback [I noticed..., I liked ..., I wish...]
- Implement a structure or protocol for self-assessment, perhaps according to criteria or a rubric
- Provide an opportunity for immediate revision based on feedback
- Let students identify a goal and receive feedback from a peer on achievement of that goal
- Or a combination of the above

WHY: State why you have chosen this strategy and how it will help your students achieve the learning goals you identified. Make sure that the connection between strategy and goals is concrete and direct.

HOW: Use the unit plan template to note how you will implement the strategy within your lessons.

WHEN: Have a timeline for implementation. Make sure it's long enough to see results and short enough to not be overwhelming.

EVIDENCE: How you will make the students' learning and doing visible to your group? Samples of evidence might include:

- Teacher/Facilitator observation notes
- Student journals
- Video or audio tape of feedback and revision
- Chart paper of student responses
- Student work with peer comments
- Students' record of their "turn and talk"
- Photographs of student work, including before and after feedback/revision

REFLECTION PROTOCOL

Once you have implemented the strategy in your Action Plan:

- Take time to reflect on what happened in implementing your Action Plan
- Document your experience and reflections using the Reflection Protocol
- Share with colleagues in your learning community and your school!
- Revise and repeat!

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ACTION PLAN

NAME:

DISCIPLINE:

SCHOOL/GRADE:

DATE:

Who (the class or group I will focus on):

Inquiry question: Please make the learning goal specific to the discipline.

Does _____ *(name the formative assessment strategy)*
improve or help my students to _____
(name Standards-based learning goal)?

Student learning goals (Standards-based):

What formative assessment strategy I will put into practice:

Why this strategy will help my students achieve or improve the above goals:

How I plan to implement this assessment strategy in my practice and/or lessons:
Provide clear step-by-step process of implementation.

When I plan to implement this strategy (at which point in the teaching/learning cycle or unit plan):

Evidence I will collect to show the effectiveness of this assessment strategy:

The Ladder of Feedback

To Cohort _____

From Cohort _____

4. Suggest:
Make suggestions for improving the work

3. Concerns:
Comment on your concerns about the work

2. Value:
Comment on the strengths of the work

1. Clarify:
Ask questions of clarification about the work being reviewed

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INTERVISITATION: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

TEACHER _____ DATE: _____

SCHOOL/GRADE: _____ UNIT SESSION #____ out of #____ SESSIONS

Observed Teacher's Inquiry Question:

What does the Observed Teacher want to receive feedback about?

Focus Questions:

- **What examples of formative assessment are used in the lesson?**
- **How and why were these assessment strategies used?**
- **How did these strategies impact learning?**

Describe what the teacher is doing. Jot down questions being asked.	Describe what the students are doing. Jot down questions they ask.

Observer's Name: _____ Date: _____

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<p>Describe what the teacher is doing. Jot down questions being asked.</p>	<p>Describe what the students are doing. Jot down questions they ask.</p>

Observer's Name: _____ Date: _____

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Observer's Name: _____ Date: _____

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INTERVISITATION: FEEDBACK PROTOCOL

Teaching and learning is an artistic and collaborative endeavor that is strengthened through participation in a professional learning community engaged in sharing and examining teaching practice. In order to ensure constructive and informative feedback from peers, the ***Artful Learning Communities Feedback Protocol*** is utilized to facilitate an exchange of ideas that respects the integrity of the arts educator's voice and develops a community of reflective practitioners. This protocol focuses observers' responses on the practitioner's own questions about her/his work. In giving and receiving feedback about a lesson, the common denominator among all participants is the desire to do their best to improve practice and ultimately student achievement. The feedback session is about the practice ***not*** the practitioner.

- **Practitioner** - shares a work-in-progress [a lesson, action plan, or intervisitation], comes to the table with an authentic question about the work, and is open to listening and receiving feedback.
- **Observers** - respect the practice of their colleague and check personal agendas and refrain from saying: *When I teach...I ...*
- **Facilitator/Coach**- keeps the process on track, and helps participants to frame their questions.

1. **Affirmations - Observers**
 - Go-round of positive feedback based on specific evidence observed or presented.
 - Practitioner takes notes and does *not* respond
2. **Clarifying Questions – Observers**
 - Observers ask questions to clarify the context of what they saw – *How often do you see this class per week?*
 - Practitioner responds succinctly to the question.
 - Facilitator keeps everyone on track.
3. **Focusing Questions - Practitioner**
 - Practitioner states questions she/he has about the lesson/work based on what he/she needs or wants to know.
 - Facilitator may help clarify the questions and charts them.
4. **Response Questions - Observers**
 - Responders form their opinions into ***neutral*** questions.

Examples of neutral questions:

Instead of saying: *The instruction section was too long.*

- Try: ***What were you trying to accomplish in the instruction section?***

You should make your goals clear from the beginning of the lesson.

▪ ***When did the students become aware of the goals of lesson and was that your intent?***

You need to hook the lesson to a big idea, it was unclear.

▪ ***What were some big ideas the lesson dealt with and how did you know the students got them?***

Suggested prompts: ***Have you considered...? Were you aware....? Have you ever thought of...?***

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- Practitioner writes down the Observer's neutral questions being asked, may ask a responder to clarify a question, but does **not** verbally respond until the end of this section.
- Facilitator actively assists Observers in articulating neutral questions.
- Clarifying questions are permissible and responded to by the Practitioner, i.e. *Had you introduced the term cue before today? / Yes, two sessions ago when we started rehearsing I gave a brief example from the script.*
- Facilitator asks Practitioner to respond to the questions he/she would like to elaborate on and/or have particular resonance with the Focusing Question. *This is a time to build greater understanding, not a time to defend.*

4. Suggestions/Opinions - Observers

- Facilitator asks the Practitioner if he/she would like to hear suggestions or opinions from the Observers.
- The Practitioner may accept, decline, or table it for a later date.
- Given permission, the Observer simply states her/his suggestion/opinion.
- This section may also be used to state other affirmations or elaborate on those previously stated – if the Practitioner is so inclined.

5. Revision [Option]

- If ready the Practitioner may state what she/he would revise in the lesson or plan.
- The Practitioner may also work through the revision with one member of the group. This may occur in private or be observed by the group. It is the Practitioner's choice.

Liz Lerman's *Toward a Process for Critical Response* (1993) adapted by ArtsConnection

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REFLECTION PROTOCOL

NAME:

DISCIPLINE:

SCHOOL/GRADE:

DATE:

Without judgement, describe what you did. Just the facts:

What went well?

What was so-so?

What was the most challenging part of trying this?

What was the impact of this strategy on student learning? (Specific examples)

What questions were raised for you as you implemented the assessment practice?

What new insights or understandings are forming as a result of this experience? (Share with group)

How do the results of your action plan inform your inquiry question?

Documentation to share (student work, photos, writing, teacher journal, etc):