

## STRIDE Notes

Wed, May 27, 2009

### Breakout Session #1

**Table 4, Session 1 (Ted Britton, Angie Deuel, Ray Nelson, Nancy Sanders, Randy Philipp)** Ray will do a collaborative rap; Nancy a poem about community; Angie's medium is water colors and magic; Ted share a stance toward an interpretive dance;) 9:30 - 10:30

**Yea for Ray! We started with him sharing his perspective.**

Ray talked a little - he immediately thought of 2 things

Approach 1: (Formal) Structured large group, everyone from same dept. or content area getting together for regular-scheduled meeting. After establishing norms and the need for student data, working on the issue.

Approach 2 (informal) Two of us getting together over the summer working on student needs. We did not so much draw upon specific data, but we talked about areas we identified and spent time thinking about this over the summer.

Question: When you started, were you all volunteers?

Ray - yes; Our district jumped on board with this and I got involved because I drew the short straw; (Angie suggested there were other criteria that Ray met.)

**Ray talked about how they worked - they came up with a common need or issue - that was really difficult.**

Coming up with a common need or issue was difficult. We did determine protocols for meetings and learning leadership skills. Knowing that the science person would be a lead person for a science PLC. Then we invited people in, and I got 1 volunteer from 6 in our group. We combined our 2 from our middle school with 4 from a neighboring school. We were just the "middle school science PLC." The first issue we had which came out of Ray's principal - when looking at our test scores, we do ok with multiple choice, but when adding in the writing piece, our scores "tank." The teachers confirmed this - our students seem to write well in lang arts but not in science. It took us a year to narrow it down; Students are asked to write a conclusion that is supported with data. It also took us to the end of the year to find out what the state was looking for. At the end of the first year I felt that we were just opening the book on this issue whereas others thought we were done and we should go on to something else.

**The district got excited about the PLC and they imposed PLCs on the teachers. This was not well received.**

Everything fizzled out except for this thing about writing science conclusions. (Angie asked why some fizzled and some did not.) Ray felt ownership was an issue - some participants thought the data were for Ray, as opposed to for themselves. Teachers have

a difficult time having discussions about students' needs. They have trouble about making their students' work public. I was astonished that these science teachers had trouble thinking about what constituted inquiry among adults, because they were teaching inquiry to their students.

The issue of "it's ok to not know something."

Randy presented an approach with teachers - asked what is and is not part of a CTI?

Ted asked about what to and not include in the definition of SCTI.

- Volunteer?
- The focus of what they attend to is participant-identified or externally identified?
- Purpose?
- Are we looking at a continuum or polar opposites?
- Are the participants making their philosophical stances about teaching and learning public? Is this something they just do, or do they learn to do it?
- Ted is uncomfortable saying that the focus has to be on student learning, especially student achievement. Given how long it took to get teachers to "be real," things like, "I want my kids to be more engaged" has to be on the table, even if it is not a focus on student learning or achievement. That seems valid as an enterprise.

Is it purpose-based? If the purpose is to deeply engage teachers in matters of substance from their practice, then it would seem to me that the process of arriving at the subject must be, at least, negotiated.

What do we foreground when you plan PD with collaborative groups? Ray suggested some vehicle for making the participants philosophical stance about education public. Do you think all kids can learn or do you not? Do you have a constructivist bent toward teaching and learning?

Teachers willing and open to change.  
PLC requires 3 or more people.

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### **Breakout Session #2**

Given our theoretical representations and how these mediate our work, what do we know about CTI? Share perspectives on what we now know about CTI

Where is the field in terms of our understandings and knowledge of CTI?

What have we learned? What do we know?

What are the general areas of CTI we know most about?

What are the specific aspects of CTI we know most about?

David mentioned that we want to talk about what we know now and tonight we'll discuss what we want to know. Randy started with the question of what we want to know, because it may be that what I want to know is already known.

One of Randy's questions: Are the positive effects of PLCs general, that is, extend beyond the context in which they were embedded? If they are specific, how far reaching are they?

Ray's work with the PLC helped him come to see the power of formative assessments. Some of what he does is not about entering into a gradebook - it is more for Ray than it is for the students. He "gets" the purpose - to inform his instruction.

Questions, Claims, and Evidence (A book Ray has found interesting)

What else do we want to know? A compendium of described models and their affordances, constraints, and effects. This might be laid out in some fairly large document. There may be enough out there to do formal, analytical work on what is out there. A kind of model analysis - what was described in each article?

Key things we talked about this morning. Ted started looking at the 40 articles about math and science. Already, at first glance - there is key information that the articles don't include.

Let's make a list of what we expect those of us writing about SCTIs to include in their methodology section - in the description.

- Level of effort (Some say "regularly" - but what is that?)
- Whether the teachers were volunteers or how they were selected

**What do we know? What would we like to know. These are related, so I'll mix them.**

- Some teachers seem to see data as *the story*. They have a kind of "proving" approach. Other teachers seem to see data as a piece of evidence that might help tell the story. They seem to take an *improving approach*. This improving approach is associated with a stance of inquiry.
- Teachers can develop stances of inquiry. That is, it is not just something one is born with. (Talk to Lisa about how we define it.)
- "This" is hard to do for teachers. There are ways to support teachers on this journey. They need time.
- There are teachers, like Ray, who have experienced PLCs with flexibility and autonomy. He very much values this experience. (But we don't know the relationship between autonomy and outcome.)
- "This" is hard to do for the facilitators of the teachers. We need to keep thinking about how to support ourselves in this work. We need to think about how to approach this work in a way that feels supportive and affirming to teachers, and not coming so much from a position that feels like a deficit model.

- Do we know that there has to be some kind of amount of facilitation? (Conjecture or Result: There has to be some kind of teacher leader, perhaps one of the teachers, who knows some stuff.)
- It is easier for us to document what the teachers are doing and saying during these PLC meetings than what aspects are critical.
- We know more about what teachers who seem to be benefiting from PLCs are getting from the PLCs than we know about those who are there but are not benefiting. Furthermore, we know little about the people who choose not to be there.
- The structure and culture of the environment matters and has to support PLCs.