

# **Picturing the Possibilities**

Promise and Personalization

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# Picturing the Possibilities...

## ***How to Use These Materials***

These support materials were designed with change in mind. We hope that as schools restructure, as new teaching strategies are adopted, and as students' skills and successes grow, the processes and protocols in this booklet can guide you and your colleagues toward a rich understanding of how to create and capitalize on powerful teaching and learning.

A video can inspire, inform, and demystify a teaching strategy, but beyond the viewing the hard work has to be done at your school and in your classrooms.

### **How are the materials organized?**

This booklet was written and compiled with careful intention. The processes, activities, and protocols used to do the work nurture a culture of collaboration. They are designed to create a learning community. Each section builds on the previous—using an inquiry cycle. In summary:

- The *Preparation* section will help you reflect on your beliefs about teaching and learning and define some important terms and concepts found in these support materials. You will be asked to think about the culture, structures, and leadership at your school. Moreover, you will be asked to define these concepts in the context of teaching and learning.
- The *Culture* section helps you examine how the culture of your school and classroom is experienced in its current form and how to begin the work of transforming the culture of your school to align with your mission and vision of powerful teaching and learning.
- The *Structures* section asks you to go in-depth to investigate the ways in which the structures of your school and classroom operate symbiotically with your commitment to powerful, personalized learning for all students and the areas where your reality falls short. The activities will guide you toward formidable ways of working collaboratively with colleagues to make your goals attainable.
- The *Leadership* section moves you to envision a school environment where the talents of all are utilized in service of students, and where a plan for the future is co-created and sustained by all stakeholders.
- In *Finishing Up* the activities are meant to tie together what you've learned in your journey toward promise and personalization. Recognizing that there is no ending to the process of change in service of students, these activities will elicit what the future may look like for your school and how the work will go on.

### **How do I choose a section or activity?**

All of the activities included in this booklet are designed to help schools construct their own knowledge and approach to the teaching strategy. They are designed with collaboration in mind. No two activities serve the same purpose;

they are as unique as the teachers and schools that use them. That is why the *Menu of Activities* you'll find in the introduction to each section will be so important to you.

We realize each school context is different; each staff's needs vary. As a result there are a variety of ways to use these materials. However, we suggest all teams begin by doing the activities in the *Preparation* section first to build a collective knowledge before moving on. Once you have completed these seven short activities,

**You can:**

Choose a section based on the timeliness of the topic in your change process and the needs of your school community. Work your way through that section together one activity at a time.

**Or**

Choose one or two activities from each section after carefully reading the descriptions in the *Menu of Activities*. Make photocopies of the menus from the four sections and, as a staff, take a quick survey. Where should you begin? What resonates with you and your colleagues? For example, you may choose to do one or two activities from the *Culture* section, three from the *Structures* section, all of the *Leadership* section, and one from *Finishing Up*.

**Or**

Break up into teams (by grade, job-alike, random, etc.) and choose activities. Once you've completed them report back as a whole staff and share your learning with one another. Keeping documentation of your work will be critical if you decide to explore the materials in this way.

Seeing images of this teaching practice in action is paramount to the work you have embarked on so please don't skip the viewing activities found in each section.

## **Why protocols?**

Have you ever left a meeting feeling like everyone was talking in circles, your voice wasn't heard, and nothing got accomplished? Now imagine a purposeful conversation with clear expectations where everyone has a role and a voice, and there are concrete steps to guide you toward a mutually agreed-upon action. Protocols are road maps, giving you directions from one place in your understanding to another. Protocols may seem awkward at first, but once you become familiar with their use and see the resulting benefits, you'll be adding them to your teaching repertoire and using them at the dinner table.

In our collection, *Planning Resources for Teachers in Small High Schools*, we gave you an array of print and web-based resources; in the *Picturing the Possibilities* video series we give you images of what powerful teaching and learning looks like; and in these support materials we give you the protocols to collaboratively turn those resources and images into reality in your school and classrooms.

### **Who should facilitate?**

With a little preparation, anyone can facilitate—an outside facilitator or coach, an administrator, a teacher-leader or teacher, or, quite possibly, a student. The activities require a thorough reading beforehand, organizing of basic materials found in most classrooms, and a willingness to be both a leader and a patient listener. If you're progressing through the materials as a small group or staff you may choose to rotate facilitators each meeting to give everyone a chance to hone their facilitation skills and to model shared leadership.

If a process or protocol seems confusing to you, run it by another colleague and don't be afraid to modify it to best meet the needs of your school context.

### **How do I track my individual and collective work?**

Many of the protocols will ask you to journal or reflect individually. You can capture your individual learning by keeping a journal. Collective work can be placed in one notebook or binder so it can be shared with others. This might include data, plans, rubrics, etc., you generate during your time together. Put the binder in a central location for all to access. You might choose to tidy up the binder as your work deepens and share it with students, families, and the community as a way to model the public nature of the changes you're enacting.

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# Preparation

## *The central focus—powerful teaching and learning:*

Schools across the country are willingly, cautiously, and reluctantly transforming themselves into places where all students are to be prepared for college, work, and citizenship. This new mission of education implies intensive changes in instructional methodologies and personal relationships. It is already clear that you can't have powerful teaching and learning without caring and trusting personal relationships—teacher to student, student to teacher, student to student, and teacher to teacher.

### **The connection to the video:**

As you and your colleagues view the video, you will become aware of the focus on teaching and learning within the context of culture, structures, and leadership. Above all, we hope you will find the activities thought-provoking and helpful.

### **Documentation:**

Collecting and reviewing your responses to the video segments, activities, and your reading will make your learning visible and increase its value as a planning and reflection resource. Plan on having teachers and staff members keep a binder (electronic or otherwise) that records and tracks their individual and collective progress.

## **Before You Begin**

*In preparation for the video and the activities that follow, you will first reflect on your beliefs about teaching and learning and define some important terms and concepts found in these support materials. You will be asked to think about the culture, structures, and leadership at your school. Moreover, you will be asked to define these concepts in the context of teaching and learning.*

### **Guiding Question #1: What are our beliefs about teaching and learning?**

#### **Purpose:**

To match teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning with the experiences they have on a daily basis, in the hope that intersections and incongruities come to light.

#### **Process:**

Take several minutes individually to write a series of "I believe..." statements regarding teaching and learning. Be your most optimistic. Next, form small teams and list examples/evidence of culture, structure, and leadership at your school and in your classrooms. Compare the list of examples/evidence to your "I believe..." statements. Discuss the questions, "How do the examples/evidence support our beliefs about teaching and learning? Where is there continuity? What is missing?" Share nuggets of wisdom with the whole group and carry this wisdom with you as you progress through these materials.

### **Guiding Question #2: How would you describe your school's culture?**

#### **Purpose:**

To provide teachers with a safe and thoughtful way to record experiences, understandings, and opinions related to the question. This record will serve as a baseline.

#### **Process:**

Prior to viewing the video it is important to obtain teachers' understandings about what defines and defends their school culture. Allow 10–15 minutes for individuals to respond in writing to the question, "How would you describe your school's culture?" This free write should go directly into your documentation binder.

Next, underline or highlight anything you have written that is related to personalization and relationships. Share these with a partner and begin a conversation around the connections between culture and personalization. Take more notes from this exchange and add them to your original free write.

## **Guiding Question #3: What are the structures that currently support your work?**

### **Purpose:**

To provide teachers with a safe and thoughtful way to record experiences, understandings, and opinions related to the question. This record will serve as a baseline.

### **Process:**

Prior to viewing the video it is interesting to discover teachers' perceptions around the supports for their practice. Allow 10–15 minutes for individuals to respond in writing to the question, "What are the structures that currently support your work?" This free write should go directly into your documentation binder.

Next, underline or highlight anything you have written that is related to personalization and relationships. Share these with a partner and begin a conversation around the connections between structures and personalization. Take more notes from this exchange and add to your original free write.

## **Guiding Question #4: What do you see as effective leadership in schools today?**

### **Purpose:**

To provide teachers with a safe and thoughtful way to record experiences, understandings, and opinions related to the question. This record will serve as a baseline.

### **Process:**

Prior to viewing the video it is important to obtain teachers' understandings about what defines and defends effective leadership. Allow 10–15 minutes for individuals to respond in writing to the question, "What do you see as effective leadership in schools today?" This free write should go directly into your documentation binder.

Next, underline or highlight anything you have written that is related to personalization and leadership. Share these with a partner and begin a conversation around the connections between leadership and personalization. Take more notes from this exchange and add to your original free write.

### **Guiding Question #5: What is powerful teaching and learning?**

**Purpose:**

To deepen understanding of the components of powerful teaching and learning.

**Process:**

Ask individuals to write about a personal experience when they were engaged in a powerful learning or teaching moment. In pairs, share stories and begin to pull out the qualities and characteristics inherent in these stories. In the large group, brainstorm the qualities of powerful teaching and learning.

Next, ask individuals to write down one sentence describing what powerful teaching and learning means to them. Share definitions and pull out key ideas. Reflect upon recurring themes and any emerging patterns. Consider how classrooms might implement these qualities and how small schools can support powerful teaching and learning. How do these definitions of powerful teaching and learning align with our beliefs about teaching and learning? What are we currently doing? What's missing?

### **Guiding Question #6: What does powerful teaching and learning look like?**

**Purpose:**

To watch the video with an open mind, soaking in the images of powerful teaching and learning.

**Process:**

Watch the video in its entirety. Discuss initial impressions.

### **Guiding Question #7: How can data inform our investigation of the culture, structures, and leadership needed in support of powerful teaching and learning?**

**Purpose:**

To encourage thoughtful, well-informed contemplation of how culture, structures, and leadership influence teaching and learning in your setting.

**Please Note:**

In order to effectively use this tool, participants will need to have grade level, school, or district data reports.

Examples of different types of data sets participants might want to look at include district writing assessments, disaggregated data for English language learners (ELL), students of color, students with free and reduced lunch, attendance, and discipline records.

# Picturing the Possibilities

This protocol builds awareness and understanding of the participants' viewpoints, beliefs, and assumptions about data while suspending judgments. All participants have an equal voice. The four phases of data-driven dialogue assist groups in making shared meaning of data in order to impact powerful teaching and learning conditions.

The labor of data collection can lead to substantial changes in the way your school operates, so don't underestimate the "action" component of this work. For example, when staff at a local middle school looked at disaggregated data of Native American students they had some surprises, and, through further discussion, determined what changes were needed to better serve that population of students at their school, and built in structures to support the focus.

***Phase I*** The Phase I Predictions dialogue takes place before you see the data. During this time, you activate prior knowledge, surface assumptions, and make predictions, thus creating readiness to examine and discuss the data. You hear and honor all assumptions and ideas as "building blocks for new learning."

## **Process:**

Please reflect privately and record several of your preliminary thoughts about the data. One or more of the following thought-starters may be helpful.

- I assume...
- I predict...
- I wonder...
- My questions/expectations are influenced by...
- Some possibilities for learning that this data may present...

Share as a whole group.

Facilitator tells the group the nature of the data they are about to receive.

***Phase II*** During the Phase II Observations dialogue, you engage with the actual data and note only the facts that you can observe in the data. Conjectures, explanations, conclusions, and inferences are off-limits.

## **Process:**

The facilitator distributes the data and you have time to study the data privately and record several of your observations.

- I observe that...
- Some patterns/trends that I notice...
- I can count...
- I'm surprised that I see...

Then as a whole group you make statements about quantities (e.g., over half the students...), the presence of certain specific information and/or numerical relationships between ideas (e.g., over ninety percent of the students achieved below standard in problem solving; compared to last year's data, the percentage of students performing at the advanced and on-standard levels in skills increased by eight percent...)

**Phase III** During the Phase III Inferences dialogue, you (a) generate multiple explanations for your Phase II Observations; (b) identify additional data that may be needed to confirm/contradict your explanations; (c) propose solutions/responses; and (d) identify data needed to monitor implementation of your solutions/responses.

**Process:**

Please reflect privately, using one or more of the following thought-starters to prompt your thinking:

- I believe the data suggest... because...
- Additional data that would help me verify/confirm my explanations are...
- I think the following are appropriate solutions/responses that address the needs implied in the data...
- Additional data that would help guide implementation of the solutions/responses and determine if they are working...

The facilitator makes sure each group has chart paper on which to record (a), (b), (c), and (d) above.

As a whole group, dialogue about and record (a), (b), (c), and (d) above.

**Phase IV** During Phase IV your conversations focus on “What are we going to do with the data and what does it mean for the culture, structures, and leadership we have in place?”

**Process:**

Please reflect privately on the urgency and sustainability of the planning process that is about to start with colleagues. Here are suggestions to initiate your thinking:

- We can engage and retain more students if...
- I think our leadership operates best when...
- I think we can best prepare students for college and work when...
- I think we exhibit powerful teaching and learning by...
- I think we can provide a deeper level of personalization by...

The facilitator sets the stage for taking the Phase III responses and converting them into action plans and timelines. This will be collaborative and time-intensive. Schools should consider allotting extended planning time for the work, such as half days or full-day retreats.

*This protocol is based on work presented by Nancy Love, author of “Using Data/Getting Results,” 2002.*

# Culture

## ***Guiding Question:***

What are the beliefs, practices, and habits that drive powerful teaching and learning?

### **Purpose:**

To investigate your current school culture through the lens of personalized, powerful teaching and learning for all students.

### **Process:**

As you watch the teachers and students in the video, reflect on your own school and classroom culture. What does teaching and learning look like in a personalized learning environment? What are the core beliefs behind practices that lead to successful teaching and learning? What personalized culture do we need to provide? How do teachers create, support, and sustain this culture? How do we develop a culture of dialogue? a culture of equity?

Review the menu of activities and, if possible, begin at the beginning and work your way forward. The activities are interrelated, so as you progress in your understanding and advocacy of a culture focused on powerful teaching and learning the activities will provide the connecting perspectives and processes you will need.

### **Documentation:**

Collecting and reviewing your responses to the video segments, activities, and your reading will make your learning visible and increase its value as a planning resource. Plan on having teachers and staff members keep a binder (electronic or otherwise) that records and tracks individual and collective progress.

## **Menu of Activities**

### **Beliefs, Tasks, and Practices**

*Participants construct a chart to align beliefs, tasks, and practices and to challenge themselves to think about the gaps. This step is necessary to have as a foundation before viewing the video in the next activity.*

### **What Matters Most? A Culture Lens**

*While watching the video, viewers are asked to identify what matters most to the people featured in the clips and make comparisons to the charts created in the last activity.*

**Making a Meaningful Culture Through Storytelling**

*Teachers tell their stories and build a powerful teaching and learning culture together.*

**Strengthening School Culture Through Multiple Perspectives**

*Participants use their individual identities to create a culture of multiple perspectives.*

**A Horseshoe Continuum Dialogue**

*A provocative yet non-threatening way to get to know the people one works with—their perspectives, beliefs, and opinions on hard issues.*

**Rituals and Traditions**

*A text-based activity that anchors culture in resilient and rich traditions.*

**A Culture Walk**

*This protocol provides a means for visitors to a school to have a meaningful interchange with hosting educators about their observations of the school.*

## ***Beliefs, Tasks, and Practices***

### **Purpose:**

To align our deeply held beliefs with our instructional and professional practices.

### **Time Allotted:**

50–60 minutes

### **Group Format:**

Individuals, small groups, and whole group

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as you will be building on the activities in the Preparation section.

This activity will require chart paper and markers or whiteboard space. Teachers can also use laptops.

### **Process:**

Teachers form small groups of three to five and are supplied with at least three sheets of chart paper and markers.

Participants write in their documentation binders “What matters most to you in what you do as a teacher? What drives your practice?” (5 minutes)

As a group, share responses and come up with a list of shared beliefs about teaching and learning. Record this list on a sheet of chart paper and label it “Beliefs.” (15 minutes)

On the second sheet of chart paper, consider the functions of your teaching job and list the actual tasks and duties you fulfill on a daily basis. Be specific, for example, “find text for a Socratic seminar, grade papers, call parents, meet with my department.”

Label this sheet “Tasks.” (10 minutes)

On the third sheet of chart paper think about the set of habits and applications of delivery that define your day-to-day modus operandi. For example, “I operate a democratic classroom,” or “I see myself as a coach or facilitator to guide students in their project work,” or “I use Essential Questions.” Label this sheet “Practices.”

Place the three sheets of chart paper next to each other on the wall or whiteboard. (2 minutes)

Stand back from the chart with colored markers and look for alignment. Draw lines linking the “Practices” and “Tasks” with the “Beliefs.” (8 minutes)

Start a conversation about alignment. Are all the deeply held beliefs represented by teaching and learning practices? Where are the gaps? What is not represented? Is there equity? (5–10 minutes)

If there is more than one group, take five minutes to share the other charts. Take notes in documentation binders of alignment work that needs to be done. (5 minutes)

Debrief: How was the process and what did we learn about our culture? (5–10 minutes)

Share these observations for the opening of your next meeting together.

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## ***What Matters Most? A Culture Lens***

### **Purpose:**

To observe and analyze the belief systems of other teachers and their administrators.

### **Time Allotted:**

50 minutes

### **Group Format:**

Individuals and small groups

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will be building on other activities in this section.

Since this activity requires participants to identify belief systems, it might be advisable to preview the video and become familiar with the roles and responsibilities of the people featured.

### **Process:**

Consider the ramifications of “school culture” in the context of what matters most. Ask and respond to clarifying questions. Look back at the work you did in the activity *Beliefs, Tasks, and Practices*. (10 minutes)

Use the viewing template located on page 19 to categorize video observation notes around the framing question of what matters most to the people featured in the video. (3 minutes)

Show the video while teachers look for this evidence and take notes. (20 minutes)

In triads or pairs, compare and contrast one another’s completed templates.

- What did we all notice about the cultures of each school?
- How did we differ in our perceptions? Why?
- What did we not see?
- What are the overt and covert indicators of culture?
- What part does personalization play in culture building?
- How does a school’s culture impact teaching and learning? (10 minutes)

From your observations and conversations, write a paragraph in your binder defining and clarifying what a school’s “culture” means to you. (5 minutes)

Debrief: How did this process impact or influence your own belief system? (7 minutes)

More closely observe the “culture” at your school. Look for evidence of beliefs, habits, and practices that reflect the true nature and climate of schooling in your building. Share these observations as an opening for your next meeting together.

# A Culture Lens Viewing Template

What matters most to the people featured in the video? Record your evidence.		
Beliefs	Practices	Habits

## ***Making a Meaningful Culture Through Storytelling***

### **Purpose:**

To examine a culture of powerful teaching and learning through storytelling.

### **Time Allotted:**

One hour

### **Group Format:**

Individuals and triads

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind the participants to bring their documentation binders, as they need them for writing their stories.

### **Process:**

Write in your journal about a powerful learning experience you had as a school-age child and what made it so powerful. (5 minutes)

Form triad groups and identify who will tell his/her story first and identify a facilitator and a timekeeper for each round.

The storyteller tells her/his story.

The participants listen in silence, perhaps making brief notes about aspects of the story that they find particularly significant.

The facilitator asks the group for clarifying questions.

Why do you think the storyteller found this to be such a powerful learning experience?

What additional insights do the participants have about why the experience was so powerful for the storyteller?

The storyteller listens in silence while taking notes about the conversation.

The storyteller reflects on any new insights on characteristics or conditions of powerful learning.

The triad repeats steps one to four until all three group members have told their stories. (15 minutes per round)

Triads discuss implications for a culture of powerful teaching and learning.

The facilitator invites participants to share any thoughts they have about their own teaching, students' learning, or ways that this particular experience might influence their contributions to a culture of powerful teaching and learning. (5 minutes)

Debrief: The group reflects on the experiences of or reactions to the protocol as a whole. (5 minutes)

## ***Strengthening School Culture Through Multiple Perspectives***

### **Purpose:**

To strengthen our school culture by understanding we bring multiple perspectives to the table that affect our beliefs, practices, and habits.

### **Time allotted:**

One hour

### **Group format:**

10–15 participants

### **Facilitation tips:**

Affirm norms for doing hard and sensitive work together—if this hasn't already been done. If it has been done months ago, time for a review.

Remind the participants to bring their documentation binders, as they need them for writing their stories.

### **Process:**

The facilitator asks everyone to silently reflect on the question, "How do you self-identify?" The facilitator points out that an identifier can be broadly defined—"woman" or "African American," or, more narrowly, "first-year teacher" or "second-year teacher."

Participants introduce themselves by giving their name and their identifier.

Clearly this involves judgment, but no one's identifier should be argued with. It must be stressed that we all have multiple ways we could describe ourselves and, for the purposes of this protocol, we will settle on one or two, e.g., "I am a principal who is committed to the 10 Common Principles." (7 minutes)

The facilitator presents the question: "What is school culture actually?" The facilitator can encourage participants to review their free write from guiding question #2. (3 minutes)

All write their first thoughts. (5 minutes)

Participants, in turn, give their preliminary thinking on the question, prefaced with their point of view:

*"From the point of view of a student, I think school culture is ..."* (10 minutes)

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Then there is a second round, with each person giving their thinking based upon what they heard from the other participants:

*"Having heard all of the other points of view, I now think..." (10 minutes)*

Have a final round to reflect on the quality of the responses:

*"I noticed that my/our responses..." (15 minutes)*

This activity can be repeated using simulations. In other words, give each participant an identity. Together these identities represent the demographics of the school community. These valuable multiple perspectives put participants in the shoes of everyone involved in the school culture.

Debrief: How did this protocol help us with multiple perspectives?

Reflect: What have we learned about building a powerful teaching and learning culture through doing this protocol? Whose perspective was missing from our conversation?

Now it is time to move on to the *Horseshoe Continuum Dialogue* activity where the multiple perspectives brought to the table will be used to ascertain where individuals stand on specific aspects of school culture.

## *A Horseshoe Continuum Dialogue*

### **Purpose:**

To see where teachers position themselves in the spectrum of school culture—beliefs, practices, and habits—and develop dialogue and greater respect for differences. This activity builds upon the work done in the *Multiple Perspectives* activity.

### **Time Allotted:**

20–30 minutes, depending on how many statements are used.

### **Group Format:**

Whole group

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will be building on other activities in this section.

This is an “out of your seat” activity that requires sufficient space for participants to form a circle with no furniture in the center space.

The facilitator establishes norms for the continuum, which are:

- Listen with respect and interest
- Speak with candor
- No one’s comments will be challenged or argued
- Thoughtful reflection on others’ responses is okay
- The facilitator is responsible for the process until he/she steps back
- When the facilitator steps back, everyone is responsible for the process

A set of statements is provided, but participants are encouraged to submit their own.

### **Process:**

Clear the space and arrange participants in a horseshoe shape—a circle with an opening at the front—so people can see each other as they speak and listen. The facilitator stands at the front by the opening. (2 minutes)

The facilitator explains that the statements they are going to hear tend to have extremes and that they are to position themselves along the horseshoe according to where they personally stand on the statements. There are no right or wrong positions. Some of the statements will tend toward personal pedagogy, and others to whole-school culture. (3 minutes)

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Once the participants have sorted themselves following the statements, the two people closest to, and on either side of the opening, are invited to have a dialogue, explaining to each other the reasons for their position. If there is time, others on the continuum can add input. (5 minutes each round)

The facilitator chooses from the following warm-up statements:

## The importance of time

always on time ↔ time doesn't mean anything

## Your desk at school (or at home)

neat and orderly all the time ↔ utter chaos

## Time of day you do your best work

dawn ↔ deep in the dark night

## Tolerance for ambiguity

like detailed, written plans ↔ go with whatever comes

## Size of group you work best with

alone ↔ the whole school, even the district, maybe the world

The facilitator transitions to statements about school culture, such as:

## Rituals used or not

begin and end each class/day with a ritual ↔ don't use any rituals

## Student voice

student-centered learning environment ↔ teacher-centered learning environment

## College-going culture

prepare all students academically and emotionally for college as the next step ↔ prepare some students academically and emotionally for college as the next step

## Culturally responsive environment

students see their culture represented in the physical environment (art, music, drama, literature, etc.) ↔ students would have a hard time finding anything in the school that represents their culture

## Making the work public

teachers readily make their work and students' work public ↔ most teacher and student work happens behind closed doors

## Parents and community

parents and community members are a regular part of the school day ↔ parents or community members are rarely seen at school except for special events or student conferences

**Culture of service**

students extend their learning out into the community through service projects



rarely does learning extend outside of the school walls

**Project-based learning**

all students regularly engage in rigorous, standards-based projects



only some students and classes use project-based learning

**Culture of collaboration**

teachers regularly collaborate to integrate, plan projects, or discuss students of concern



rarely do teachers have an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues

Debrief: How did this process change or clarify your thinking? (5 minutes)

Use this activity in classrooms, faculty meetings, and in professional development workshops to gain a sense of where people are in terms of the controversial or assumed aspects of the work at hand.

## *Rituals and Traditions*

### **Purpose:**

To anchor school culture in rich and resilient traditions and rituals that reflect personalized and powerful teaching and learning.

### **Time allotted:**

60–90 minutes

### **Group format:**

Individuals, triads, small groups, and whole group

### **Facilitation tips:**

Affirm norms for doing hard and sensitive work together—if this hasn't already been done. If it has been done months ago, time for a review.

Remind the participants to bring their documentation binders, as they need them brainstorming and note-taking.

### **Process:**

Individually create a list of traditions and rituals that your school observes, often without question, on an ongoing year-round basis. Record on chart paper. (10 minutes)

Highlight or circle the ones that are directly connected to, or significantly influence, powerful and personalized teaching and learning and share these in a triad. (10 minutes)

Underline the ones that have the potential to reflect or celebrate powerful teaching and learning and also share these. (5 minutes)

Triads combine to form groups of six. Step back and contemplatively analyze the patterns that have emerged. (15–35 minutes)

Ask yourself:

- What do you see?
- What do you not see?
- What is the message?
- What does this pattern represent in terms of a vision of powerful teaching and learning for all?
- What belief systems are revealed?
- What accounts for the resilience and longevity of many of these traditions and rituals?

- Who participates in them?
- Who does not?
- Is the pattern of participation equitable?

In small groups design or dream up an alternative set of traditions and rituals that more closely reflect a vision of personalization and powerful teaching and learning for all. (15 minutes)

Report out to the whole group. (10 minutes)

Divide the large group into three groups. Each group takes one of the topics below, discusses, and then shares out to the whole group. (15 minutes)

- *Innovation:* What are the processes of initiating and tracking a new ritual or tradition? Who should be involved? How will we measure over time? How will our culture change as a result?
- *Courageous conversations:* Carefully discuss and discern the leverage points for opening up conversations about equity and privilege. How can we challenge the current traditions in the interest of serving all students? What are the elephants in the room?
- *Student voice:* What is the student role in starting new traditions or maintaining old ones? What are the processes and motivation for student-centered rituals around powerful teaching and learning?

Debrief: How did this protocol help us appreciate the rituals and traditions of living cultures? What have we learned about building a powerful teaching and learning culture through doing this protocol? (5 minutes)

## ***A Culture Walk***

### **Purpose:**

To provide a means for visitors to a school to have a meaningful interchange with hosting educators about their observations of the school.

### **Time Allotted:**

One hour

### **Group Format:**

Pairs and whole group

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Invite visitors from another school to walk through your school.

This protocol can help hosting educators glean insight from their visitors and deepen the learning of the visitors themselves. This will also help refine the learning from the previous activity, *Rituals and Traditions*.

### **Process:**

#### **School Walk**

Pair up in cross-school pairs and walk through the host school for 20–30 minutes. Make non-evaluative observations, avoiding qualitative judgments about what you see. As you walk, discuss the following questions and use the template located on page 30 to record your observations:

- What do you see? What don't you see?
- What do you wonder about?
- What do you think this school values?
- What do you think this school is working on?

If you are a member of the school's faculty, don't give a tour, explain, apologize, or show off. Look at your school and participate in the protocol with a beginner's mind.

#### **Sharing observations**

Return to the large group, and visitors share findings on the questions in sequence. Hosts actively listen.

#### **Host reflections**

Hosts reflect aloud on what they heard that surprised and interested them and what they saw during their walk that was new.

### Implications for teaching and learning

Discuss the implications of the observations for educating all students. Describe how the culture supports educating all students. What structures are in place to promote the idea of educating all students? What evidence of shared leadership did you observe? How do the values the visitors inferred align with our beliefs about teaching and learning?

Design follow-up conversations to address the implications presented by the visitors. Invite another team of visitors from another school and compare and contrast the observations and implications. Use this as an encore to visit another school to see how culture, structure, and leadership work together toward promise and personalization.

Debriefing the protocol: Was it valuable? How could it have been better? How might this protocol be put to use in the future?

*Edorah Frazer, adapted from the Collaborative Assessment Conference developed by Steve Seidel.*

# A Culture Walk Evidence Template

**What do you see? What don't you see?**

**What do you wonder about?**

**What do you think this school values?**

**What do you think this school is working on?**

# Structures

## *Guiding Questions:*

What are the structures and resources that support a powerful teaching and learning community?

How does our culture create and sustain the structures that support powerful, personalized teaching and learning?

### **Purpose:**

To identify your school structures in order to ensure that *all* students have access to powerful, personalized teaching and learning.

### **Process:**

As you watch the teachers and students in the video, identify the common and necessary resources that support successful teaching and learning. What structures are in place? What is the professional capital that is nurtured and strengthened to establish and sustain an equitable learning environment? What are the conditions for optimal student growth and development? What needs to change in your own schools and classrooms to align structures with the vision of powerful teaching and learning?

School-wide structures that support powerful teaching and learning are both obvious and disguised. They exist as a means to unite and define the entire school environment (for example, school-wide collaborations) and also to distinguish one classroom or smaller learning environment from another. Structures typically encompass institutionalized conditions/routines, functions/ processes, and supports/ resources that are in place to stabilize and maintain the work of schools.

#### **Conditions and routines:**

- Schedules
- Planning time
- Small schools
- Collaboration time (e.g., waiver days, early releases, and late starts)
- Graduation
- Senior project

#### **Functions and processes:**

- Service-learning
- Internships
- Culminating projects
- Learning walks
- Assessment
- Curriculum design
- Instructional frameworks

#### **Supports and resources:**

- Advisories
- Community partnerships
- Tutoring
- Student-led conferences
- Literacy initiatives
- Daycare

# Picturing the Possibilities

Review the menu of activities and, if possible, begin at the beginning and work your way forward. The activities are interrelated so as you progress in your understanding and advocacy of structures that support powerful teaching and learning, the activities will provide the connecting perspectives and processes you will need.

## **Documentation:**

Collecting and reviewing your responses to the video segments, activities, and your reading will make your learning visible and increase its value as a planning resource. Plan on having teachers and staff members keep a binder (electronic or otherwise) that records and tracks individual and collective progress.

## **Menu of Activities**

### **Chalk Talk**

*This is a silent activity during which participants map the structures and conditions for powerful teaching and learning.*

### **Tea Party**

*Share and critique a selection of ideas and thoughts on the structures of personalized, powerful teaching and learning.*

### **A Structure Lens**

*Watch the video with an eye for structures at the schools in the video that support powerful, personalized teaching and learning.*

### **Are We Walking Our Talk?**

*An activity to examine your structures and practices as individual teachers and as a school and measure them against the bar of your vision and mission statements.*

### **Constructivist Protocol for Adult Work**

*This activity helps participants gain a deeper understanding of how they do their best work.*

### **Making Time for Collaboration**

*Find ways and means for collaboration.*

### **Peer Observation Guide: Classroom Structures**

*Learn how to make feedback a non-threatening and yet purposeful condition of powerful teaching.*

### **Feedback Carousel**

*Obtain a variety of different kinds of feedback from a large number of people in a relatively short period of time.*

## Chalk Talk

### Purpose:

To encourage thoughtful contemplation of the structures and conditions required for powerful teaching and learning.

### Time Allotted:

30–40 minutes

### Group Format:

Whole group

### Facilitation Tips:

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as you will be building on the activities in the previous sections.

This activity will require several sheets of chart paper and markers or whiteboard space and whiteboard markers. If using chart paper, tape it together to form a horizontal banner and attach to a wall.

The whole group assembles in front of the whiteboard or chart paper and awaits directions from the facilitator.

### Process:

The facilitator explains very briefly that chalk talk is a silent activity. No one may talk at all and anyone may add to the chalk talk as they please. You can comment on other people's ideas simply by drawing a connecting line to the comment. It can also be very effective to say nothing at all—just put finger to lips in a gesture of silence and simply begin.

The facilitator writes the following question in a circle on the board.

- What structures need to be in place to support our beliefs about teaching and learning?

The facilitator either hands markers to everyone or places many at the board and hands several others to people at random.

People write as they feel moved. There are likely to be long silences—that is natural, so allow plenty of time before deciding it is over.

A chalk talk can be an uncomplicated silent reflection or a spirited, but silent, exchange of ideas. It has been known to solve vexing problems, surprise everyone with how much is collectively known about something, get an entire project planned, or give a committee everything it needs to know without any verbal sparring.

# Picturing the Possibilities

When it's done, it's done.

The facilitator leads an interaction with the chalk talk. The facilitator can stand back and let it unfold or expand thinking by:

- circling interesting ideas, thereby inviting comments to broaden
- asking questions about a participant's comment
- adding his/her own reflections or ideas
- connecting two interesting ideas/comments together with a line and adding a question mark.

Reflect: What structures and conditions do we have in place that support our beliefs about teaching and learning? What's missing? What might we change or add as we move toward a vision of personalization and powerful teaching and learning?

Complete the I-MAP located on page 35 to turn your chalk talk into action. Decide how you will hold yourselves accountable and when you will review the I-MAPs.

*Originally developed by Hilton Smith, Foxfire Fund.*

# Individual Monthly Action Plan (I-MAP) for Personalization

What implications does our personalization work have for my practice between this meeting and the next? What change will I work on making in my dealing with others?

**Planned Change: What will I do?** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Why am I planning to do this?</b> <i>How is this change aligned with the 3 Rs? What do I hope will happen as a result of this change in my practice?</i>	<b>How will I initiate this change?</b> <i>What am I going to do? What steps will I take and when will I take them?</i>	<b>What supports do I need to be successful?</b> <i>Who can help me and what do I need from them?</i>	<b>How will I know if I've made progress?</b> <i>What evidence will I review? How will I document my growth?</i>

*Possible supports, next steps to consider: individual conference, peer visitation/observation, presenting work at an upcoming meeting, online conversation with other group member(s), reflective journal writing.*

## Tea Party

### Purpose:

To share and critique a selection of ideas and thoughts on the structures of personalized, powerful teaching and learning.

### Time Allotted:

45–60 minutes

### Group Format:

Whole group and pairs

### Facilitation Tips:

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as you will be building on the activities in the previous sections.

Remind participants that their reflections are to be focused on the “structures”—conditions, resources, and supports—for personalized, powerful teaching and learning.

### Process:

*Step 1:* Facilitator writes quotes on index cards prior to session. You may choose one quote per participant or repeat some quotes.

*Step 2:* Participants randomly select quotes/cards and spend a few minutes reflecting upon their quote’s meaning for them and their work. (3 minutes)

*Step 3:* Participants mingle and share quotes in pairs. Participants are encouraged to share with three other participants in 5-minute segments. (15 minutes)

*Step 4:* (Optional) Form triads or quads and share quotes and insights about the text and its implications for our work.

*Step 5:* Whole group sharing of ideas and questions raised by the experience. This can be done popcorn style or as a round, but is usually not a conversation. (10–12 minutes)

*Step 6:* Facilitator shares the source of the quotes, posting the link, distributing the article, etc., for future work. (1 minute)

*Step 7:* Debrief the process. (5 minutes)

Other possibilities:

- Have participants exchange cards/quotes after each round.
- Use this format to share end-of-year reflections or start-up aspirations.
- Using quotes from longer pieces can open up the conversation in large, mixed groups where students and family members might have previously been excluded from the discussion of the material.

*Adapted by D. Bambino from Kyleene Beers’ pre-reading strategy.*

## Tea Party Quotes

*I think you need to really think about what is it that you value. Are the structures and the things that you're putting into place going to be things that would contribute to that or are they things that you're going to fight against all the time?*  
–Kim Huseman, Quest High School

*Something that we did very wisely when we started the school is we were very true to wanting to make sure we had enough time to collaborate. Because you know there's a progression a professional learning community goes through to reach its fruition when it can work on teaching and learning. But the evolution of that involves having structures and processes in place to do that.*  
–Lawrence Kohn, Quest High School

*Kids meet five days a week with two adults in the school and we have about 24 kids in each [advisory]. We do team building together. They talk about issues but that one structure is really the backbone of the culture of the school. Because lots of things take place through [advisory].* –Kim Huseman, Quest High School

*There is a support structure for kids as they move through the school and they form really long-lasting relationships with the teachers. But there are also relationships formed between those teachers and the parents, because another part of the structure is the advisors who advise those kids also are the primary point of contact with the parents. And so [parents] have an opportunity for over four years to be speaking with the same adult in the school about the growth and development, both academically and affectively, of their child. It's a pretty complex thing but it's a structure that serves multiple purposes, that really gets at some of the core values at a school.* –Kim Klepcyck, Quest High School

*Every Wednesday there is a block of time, a large block of time for kids to be able to be out in the community, serving their community, and engaging within their community. And without that structure those kinds of learning experiences would directly be affected. And when the school was actually designed it was designed with that attitude in mind.* –Kim Huseman, Quest High School

*You want to create a structure where you can maximize student/teacher time, so they're consistent with one another throughout the four-year process.*  
–Daryl Wright, Phoenix Academy

*We have to make choices that are best for kids. This isn't about me. This isn't about you. This is about looking at something like, for example, our curricular map. And it's looking at the data and then looking at where our society is headed in terms of what kids need to know.* –Daryl Wright, Phoenix Academy

# Picturing the Possibilities

*You have to be intentional about creating a culture. And it happens when we say that serving every student, every kid, not just some of them, is how we're going to operate here. So, we set the frame for that. That is the minimum responsibility of every adult in the building—to know the kids that she works with very well.*

—Rick Lear, Small Schools Project

*There are a number of structures that need to be in place. First of all, we need a structure that allows teachers to work with the same set of students for a couple years, and possibly even three years.*

—Rick Lear, Small Schools Project

*There needs to be some arrangement so that teachers who work with those same students can talk together and exchange information. And, in a perfect world, there also would be the expectation that they would integrate their teaching and learning across those subjects.*

—Rick Lear, Small Schools Project

*Schools need something to give adults a focus so they can promote the coherence that kids need. So when someone says to an adult, "What's at the heart of this school?," they're going to be able to say, "We're an inquiry based school where we focus on project-based learning."*

—Rick Lear, Small Schools Project

*Developing these collaborative learning communities is essential. Teachers have in the past not really talked to each other and been pretty isolated. So, we find they need to learn how to do that, to share their knowledge with each other.*

—Jan Reeder, Coalition of Essential Schools Northwest

*The community has a vested interest in the schools. They use the product of the schools. And so we need to be in conversation with them.*

—Jan Reeder, Coalition of Essential Schools Northwest

*My vision of an equitable school is that 100 percent of my students become successful. And because we understand who they are we are able to put systems in place, of support, rather than squelching their success.*

—Brent Kline, Mariner High School

*Allowing time for teachers to talk about students, student work, experiences in the classroom, is our number one roadblock right now. We're not honoring teachers' time, because we expect them to do it after their [work] day. I think that we need to be able to have systems in place that allow that to happen during the teachers' day.*

—Brent Kline, Mariner High School

*All quotes transcribed from audio.*

## A Structure Lens

**Purpose:**

To observe the video and gather evidence and indicators of structures—processes, conditions, and supports—that are in place or operating.

**Time Allotted:**

50 minutes

**Group Format:**

Individuals and pairs or triads

**Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will be reflecting on the activity directly into the binders.

Make copies of the *Structure Lens Viewing Template* located on page 40 and distribute to participants prior to viewing the video.

**Process:**

Explain the template grid and activity expectations. (5 minutes)

Show the video. (20 minutes)

Allow extra time to complete the grid. (5 minutes)

In triads or pairs, compare and contrast each other's completed templates.

- What did we all notice about the structures of each school?
- How did we differ in our perceptions? Why?
- What did we not see?
- What are the overt and covert indicators of structures?
- What part does personalization play in establishing and maintaining structures?
- How do a school's structures impact teaching and learning? (10 minutes)

From your observations and conversations, write a paragraph in your binder defining and clarifying what the school's "structures" mean to you. (5 minutes)

Debrief. (5 minutes)

# A Structure Lens Viewing Template

What evidence and indicators of structures do we see?		
Processes	Conditions	Supports

## *Are We Walking Our Talk?*

### **Purpose:**

To examine your structures and practices as an individual teacher and as a school and measure them against the bar of your vision and mission statements.

### **Time Allotted:**

Ongoing, initial activity two hours

### **Group Format:**

Individuals, small, and large group

### **Facilitation Tips:**

You will need copies of the school's vision and mission statements for all members. **DON'T PASS THEM OUT YET!** You will also want to review your community agreements and the importance of identifying issues and ideas versus individuals in your conversations.

### **Process:**

Ask the whole group to brainstorm a list of all the structures they can think of that are in place in the school. Chart them for everyone to see. This list should be broad and include everything from "advisory" to "six-period days."

Individually, or in small groups, read the vision and mission statements and underline a word, phrase, and sentence in each, highlighting the essential commitment of your school to personalization and powerful teaching and learning.

As a whole group, share the choices in rounds and capture the words and phrases on chart paper that can sit side by side with the results of the structures brainstorm. (10–15 minutes)

Take time for everyone to reflect silently on the two lists sitting side by side. (3 minutes)

Ask participants to call out a structure that they believe puts into action a word or phrase from the mission statement. For example, if the school is committed to all students using their minds well, you would look for examples of high expectations for all through rigorous assignments, de-tracking of classes, etc. Ask, "How does this structure support powerful, personalized teaching and learning?" The facilitator can draw lines connecting the structure with the word or phrase. (15 minutes)

Other members can ask clarifying questions and add evidence or challenge any evidence that has been presented. (5 minutes)

# Picturing the Possibilities

The group looks for gaps between the words—or “talk”—of the vision and mission and their structures—their “walk.” (10 minutes)

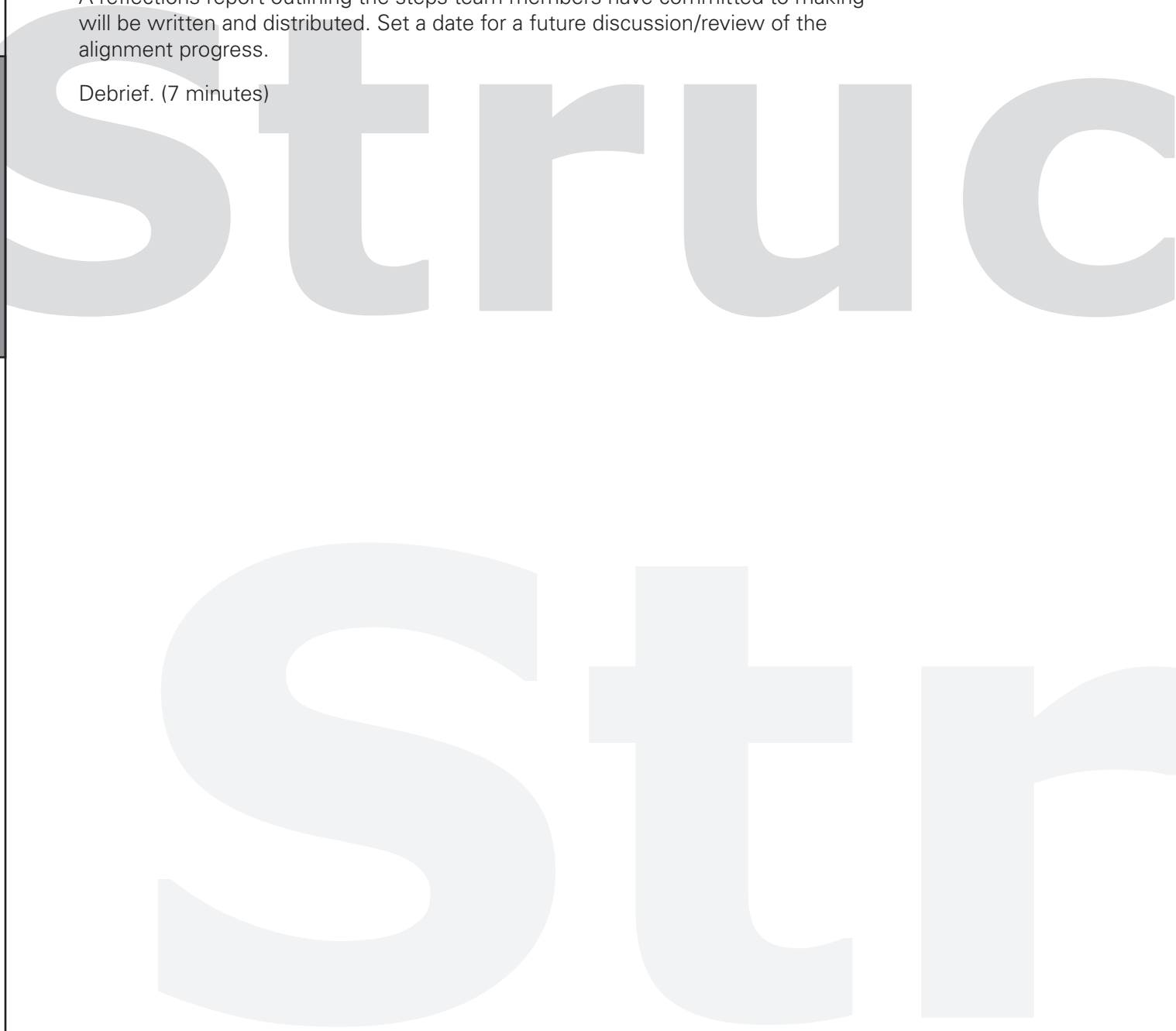
Take a reflective pause. (5 minutes)

Rap around where anyone who wishes to can suggest an idea to fill the gaps between the talk and walk without being challenged. (10 minutes)

Ask all members to reflect in writing on the step they will take the next day to help align their own walk and talk and collect reflections. (5–7 minutes)

A reflections report outlining the steps team members have committed to making will be written and distributed. Set a date for a future discussion/review of the alignment progress.

Debrief. (7 minutes)



## ***Constructivist Protocol for Adult Work***

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this activity is to help staff gain a deeper understanding of how they, as adults, do their best work. With this understanding and heightened awareness, staff can more consciously provide the type of culture and structures they need to do their best work more often.

### **Time Allotted:**

80–90 minutes

### **Group Format:**

Whole group, pairs, and individuals

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as you will be building on the activities in the previous sections.

### **Process:**

#### **Individual writing (15 minutes)**

Write about a time you did your very best work, a time you really “nailed it.” Describe the work. Use the following guiding questions to fully describe your work:

- What was it that you did?
- Why were you doing it?
- Did you have support? What did that support look like?
- Did you work alone or with other people?
- Was this work hard? risky? safe?
- What motivated you?
- How did you know your work was good? What were the qualities of your work?
- Did you know you “nailed it” immediately or did that knowledge come to you later?

# Picturing the Possibilities

## Paired Sharing (30 minutes)

With a partner, share what you wrote. As you talk, your partner will be listening for “working conditions.” Working conditions can be the structures, supports, atmosphere, purpose, standards, risk level, etc., that you describe as aspects of your situation that led to your success.

Partners may ask clarifying and probing questions to gain a better sense of your “working conditions.”

Partners take notes and then tell you what “working conditions” they heard you describe. Check for accuracy and agreement. Put these conditions on newsprint to be posted.

Switch roles and repeat the sharing process. (15 minutes for each person)

## Whole Group (20 minutes)

Post newsprint lists of “working conditions.”

Graze and react. What do you see? Any surprises?

## Summary Activity (10 minutes)

Identify those working conditions/structures, etc., that emerged out of the conversation for teachers to do their best work around powerful teaching and learning. For example, if a pattern emerged around a need for time to collaborate with colleagues to bring work to the table, provide a process or an action plan for creating those conditions.

Debrief the protocol experience. (5 minutes)

Modify this activity for use with students to uncover what their best “working conditions” are. Use this information to maximize student achievement.

## ***Making Time for Collaboration***

### **Purpose:**

To consider what structures need to be in place in order to support time for collaboration.

### **Time Allotted:**

One hour

### **Group Format:**

Large and small groups

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Distribute copies of the *Making Time* template located on page 46.

### **Process:**

As a whole group, consider what your needs are around collaboration. Maybe it is to map your curriculum, to integrate content areas, to plan projects, to bring teacher and student work to the table, to plan or evaluate current programs such as advisory, etc. Brainstorm a list, then as a group prioritize your list of ideas for this school year. (15 minutes)

Break into small groups. Your task, in each group, is to take one to three of the suggestions and thoroughly discuss the pros, cons, and possibilities of each one. Also begin to develop an action plan and hypothesize about the outcome of this action on student learning. Record your small group's position on each suggestion on the *Making Time* template and be prepared to report out to the whole group. (40 minutes)

Debrief. (5 minutes)

Present the viable options to the principal or site council for further action.

# Making Time Template

Pros			
Cons			
Possibilities			
Action Plan			
Outcome			

## Peer Observation Guide: Classroom Structures

### Purpose:

To learn how to make feedback a non-threatening yet purposeful condition while examining classroom structures that support powerful teaching and learning.

### Time Allotted:

30–40 minutes

### Group Format:

Pairs

### Facilitation Tips:

Up until this point staff have been focusing on school-wide structures. This activity and the next, *Feedback Carousel*, focus on classroom structures. Encourage pairs to discuss the similarities and differences between school-wide and classroom structures. How do they support one another? What are the consequences if they conflict? What is our individual responsibility?

### Process:

Each person should choose the person with whom they will work. They should agree to take turns being the observer and the observed.

The pair should establish ground rules for giving and receiving feedback.

For example: “Our observation data will remain confidential”; “We will meet to follow up on the observation within 24 hours of the observation.”

Reflect through journal writing on some of the bigger questions about teaching practice—high expectations, differentiation, college-ready culture, personalization, equity, student voice, etc. Articulate a question for observation using the prompt—“Does the structure of my classroom foster and support\_\_\_\_\_?”

The observer, armed with a short list of what to look for from the person being observed, comes and watches the class or meeting for a short time (15–20 minutes at first, longer as the pair becomes more comfortable with both observation and feedback).

The two people meet afterwards, undisturbed. During this meeting:

- the partners should sit with the data between them.
- the observed should refocus on the questions she or he asked. That is, reflect on the questions in light of the data brought back by the observer.

## Picturing the Possibilities

- the observer should share the things s/he saw, heard, and tracked rather than what s/he thought about them. Allowing the observer to evaluate or judge the observed will poison the process quickly.
- there should be some talk of what did and didn't happen and how the observed could make it happen next time.
- the observed should encourage the observer to reflect on the relevance of the data to the questions.
- both observer and observed should watch for defensive behavior.
- the observer should check for signals to see if the observer has had enough.

Reflection: As the observed, take time to capture what you learned during the post-observation conference. As a result, consider what changes you might make in terms of the structures within your classroom that support personalization and powerful teaching and learning. Choose one and implement. You can also set up a follow-up observation with your partner to come and observe the changed structure.

## Feedback Carousel

### Purpose:

The purpose of the feedback carousel is to bring a piece of work and analyze the structures that need to be in place for successful implementation.

### Time Allotted:

50 minutes

### Group Format:

Whole group or teams

### Facilitation Tips:

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as you will be building on the activities in the previous sections.

Provide chart paper (two sheets each), colored Post-its, and markers.

Before the activity, ask the participants to bring something they are working on for the future that relates to a new practice around powerful teaching and learning and the conditions and/or structures that need to be in place to successfully implement it, e.g., a unit or project design, performance task, rubric, or service-learning project.

### Process:

To set up this activity, have each person or team display the significant elements of their plan on a piece of chart paper. Encourage the use of color and creativity. (5 minutes)

Next to each piece of chart paper, put up another chart paper that is divided into four parts. The top left quadrant is for clarifying questions, the top right quadrant is for probing questions, the third quadrant is for recommendations, and the fourth quadrant is for resources that would be useful to the planning team. (5 minutes)

Distribute small Post-its to every participant and ask them to rotate through as many plans as time permits, write feedback on a Post-it, and place the feedback in the appropriate quadrant. (20 minutes)

Have a whole-group discussion based on the questions:

- What classroom structures and supports did we see were necessary for most of these practices to be carried out? (Look for patterns.)
- What school-wide structures and supports did we see were necessary for most of these practices to be carried out? (Look for patterns.)
- How can we support one another in creating the structures necessary to make powerful teaching and learning a reality? (15 minutes)

Debrief: How does the feedback carousel nurture a culture of making our work public, collaborating, and seeking the advice of our colleagues? (5 minutes)

# Leadership

### ***Guiding Question:***

How does our individual and collective leadership structure generate and sustain powerful teaching and learning?

#### **Purpose:**

To consider leadership models that have the capacity and vision to do what it takes to sustain powerful teaching and learning with personalization and promise.

#### **Process:**

As you watch the individuals in the video, consider their individual approaches to building and sustaining powerful teaching and learning environments. What are their personal and professional attributes? How does principals' leadership forge this personalized school culture? What does shared leadership look like in a personalized learning environment? What is your vision of an equitable school? How do you begin the work? How do you sustain the work? What are the roadblocks? How critical is the leadership role in making the vision a reality? What needs to change in our schools and communities?

According to the *Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL): University of Indianapolis*, coherence, relationships, moral imperative, and urgency are increasingly demanding the attention of school leadership. Coherence comes out of the belief and vision that it is essential we know our students well, that we have meaningful relationships with each and every one of them. Leaders establish moral imperative with the school community based on the principles of democracy and social justice for all. There is urgency for maximizing student learning, professional community, and program coherence leading to student achievement and readiness for college work and citizenship. Leadership then, must be responsive, facilitative, and distributed.

We suggest that you watch the video together at the beginning and at the end of this section. The first time, you'll be observing leaders and spokespersons and noting their roles and responsibilities. At the end of the activities, you'll be viewing with a more critical eye, formulating your questions and ideas for the way a school's leadership might look in the context of personalization and equity.

Review the menu of activities and, if possible, begin at the beginning and work your way forward. The activities are interrelated so as you progress in your understanding of the impact of leadership on powerful teaching and learning, the activities will provide the connecting perspectives and processes you will need to realize the promise of "all kids, new skills, no excuses."

## **Documentation:**

Collecting and reviewing your responses to the video segments, activities, and your reading will make your learning visible and increase its value as a planning resource. Plan on having teachers and staff members keep a binder (electronic or otherwise) that records and tracks individual and collective progress.

## **Menu of Activities**

### **Shared Leadership**

*Use a text-based protocol to comprehend the dimensions of shared leadership.*

### **A Leadership Lens**

*This activity will ask you to observe the video and gather evidence and indicators of leadership.*

### **Leadership Qualities**

*This exercise focuses on authentic qualities of leadership for change.*

### **A New Model for Teacher Leadership**

*Reaffirm or redesign your school's teacher leadership.*

### **Back to the Future**

*Imagine the future and foretell what it would look like in the very best case scenario.*

## ***Shared Leadership***

### **Purpose:**

To unpack the notion of “shared leadership” and apply new understandings to our own professional career.

### **Time Allotted:**

One hour

### **Group Format:**

Small groups of four to six

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will be using these to record evidence and findings.

This activity unfolds as a text-based protocol. Participants will need to obtain the text from the following Internet site and bring it to the session.

*Essential Leadership in the School Change Process* by Kathleen Cushman.

[http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces\\_res/101](http://www.essentialschools.org/cs/resources/view/ces_res/101)

### **Process:**

Meet in small groups and take five minutes to establish norms and to elect a timekeeper and process observer.

Take ten minutes to read the article, highlighting or taking side notes. What agreements and alignments do you notice in terms of the qualities of shared leadership?

Take turns to respond to the following prompts. But before you respond acknowledge the comments of the person before you. (2 minutes each). Start with a different person each round and change the direction of the responses after two rounds. (40 minutes total)

*Agreements* – What aspects of this article do you agree with in terms of shared leadership? Think about attributes and habits.

*Alignments* – How does the author’s experience align with your own or your school’s experience with shared leadership?

*Adjustments* – As a result of reading this article what changes or modifications could you make to your own views on shared leadership?

*Aspirations* – What do you now aspire to as a teacher leader?

Debrief the process. (5 minutes)

- How did the protocol advance your thinking?
- How might you use this process with your students?
- What adjustments would you make to the process?
- Other comments?

Make inquiries within your school district and beyond about workshops, internships, and courses that prepare leaders for schools of the twenty-first century.

If educational leadership is in your plans for the future, start now to look for a mentor who will provide guidance and support as you begin the journey in leadership training and preparation.

## ***A Leadership Lens***

### **Purpose:**

To observe the video and gather evidence and indicators of leadership that support and sustain powerful, personalized teaching and learning to inform your practice.

### **Time Allotted:**

One hour

### **Group Format:**

Individuals and pairs or triads

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will be reflecting on the activity directly into the binders.

Make copies of the viewing template located on page 55 and distribute to participants prior to viewing the video.

### **Process:**

Explain the template grid and activity expectations. (5 minutes)

Show the video. (20 minutes)

Allow extra time to complete the grid. (5 minutes)

In triads or pairs, compare and contrast one another's completed templates.

### **Observations**

- What did we all notice about the leadership of each school?
- What forms did leadership take?
- How did we differ in our perceptions? Why?
- What did we not see?
- What are the overt and covert indicators of leadership?

### **Implications**

- What does it mean to be a leader?
- What does it mean to be a leader at our school?
- What part does personalization play in supporting and sharing leadership?
- How does a school's leadership impact teaching and learning? (10 minutes)

Share the highlights of your conversations with the whole group. (10 minutes)

From your observations and conversations, write a paragraph in your binder defining and clarifying what the school's "leadership" means to you. (5 minutes)

Debrief. (5 minutes)

# A Leadership Lens Viewing Template

What evidence and indicators of leadership do we see?		
Vision	Direction	Capacity

## ***Leadership Qualities***

### **Purpose:**

To define the qualities of leadership.

### **Time Allotted:**

30 minutes

### **Group Format:**

Pairs

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will want to take notes.

This activity was originally designed primarily for principals and instructional leaders but has been adapted for use as a teacher leadership experience. The idea is that everyone is a leader.

### **Process:**

Take a few minutes to think about the most rewarding experiences you have had as a principal, teacher-leader, CFG coach, classroom teacher, coach, etc. What are the qualities of leadership that made these experiences so memorable? What are the critical characteristics of the leadership experiences for you as a teacher, learner, or leader?

Write down three to five one-word descriptors of the qualities that are most important to you as a leader, a teacher, and a learner. (5 minutes)

Gather in groups of two to three and share one of your most rewarding experiences. After you have each told your stories, reflect together on what the elements of respect, trust, and relationship had in shaping the experiences. (15 minutes)

Take a few minutes to think about a leadership issue that you are struggling with right now. How might you use the elements of respect, trust, and relationship to influence how you will respond to your current dilemma? Make a note of one thing you will do in this situation based on a new insight. (5 minutes)

Share your new insights with your partner(s). (5 minutes)

# ***A New Model for Teacher Leadership***

## **Purpose:**

To reaffirm or redesign your school's teacher leadership model in support of sustaining a vision of personalization and promise.

## **Time Allotted:**

55–60 minutes

## **Group Format:**

Individuals, pairs, triads, whole group

## **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will want to journal in them and also record salient points of the conversations.

Make copies of the article *What Does Leadership Capacity Really Mean?* by Linda Lambert, National Staff Development Council, Spring 2005. It can be found at <http://www.nsd.org/members/jsd/lambert262.pdf>

## **Process:**

### **Journaling (5 minutes)**

- What are your hopes for your work as a teacher leader?
- What fears do you have about your work as a teacher leader?
- What questions do you have about teacher leadership?

### **Share in pairs from journals (10 minutes)**

Five minutes each—open listening, no interruptions.

Read Lambert article. (10 minutes)

### **Triad conversations (15 minutes)**

- What excites me about this model of leadership?
- What scares me about this model of leadership?
- What are my strengths and gifts as a teacher leader?
- What qualities of teacher leadership are challenges for me that I personally want to develop further?
- What areas of leadership does my school need me or others to develop further?

The whole group responds to this activity. (15 minutes)

Address dilemmas or questions identified by participants in their original journaling.

After reviewing your notes and additional journaling, begin to think about a plan of action for yourself (as a teacher leader) or for your school, such as a teacher leader collaborative.

Debrief. (5 minutes)

## ***Back to the Future***

### **Purpose:**

To vision into the future and describe what your school's culture and leadership would look like. What are the structures in place that work toward sustaining personalization and powerful teaching and learning? Also to initiate discussion into the steps, players, actions, and timelines it will take to be successful.

### **Time Allotted:**

One hour

### **Group Format:**

Whole group

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will be building on the activities in the previous sections.

Members of groups should have similar investment in and context for what will be presented.

### **Process:**

Ask the group to consider what the culture, structure, and leadership looks like in a school where all kids are known well and powerful teaching and learning is a norm. (5 minutes)

### **Probing questions**

Raise probing questions to the whole group with no real expectation of answering them in this step. Again, the idea is to extend the thinking about what they want to accomplish. (10 minutes)

### **Project into the future (whatever timeline seems appropriate)**

Thoroughly describe what it looks like, sounds like, and feels like having accomplished this endeavor.

Everyone must talk in ***present tense***.

Describe what is in this best-case scenario. Do not yet describe how.

Focus on the sights, sounds, behaviors, and feelings surrounding this accomplishment.

Describe what the culture, structure, and leadership looks like in a school where all kids are known well and powerful teaching and learning is a norm. (5 minutes)

It is really helpful to chart these comments these so that each participant can see publicly what is being said. (10–15 minutes)

Look “back” from your projected present and describe how it looked when it started. Everyone must talk in ***past tense***.

Think about issues, culture, conversations, teachers’ work, student achievement, etc. For example, “Remember when we didn’t have a structure to support advisory, where we didn’t have kids over four years and how difficult it was to develop meaningful relationships? How easy it was for some kids to slip through the cracks?”

Try to remain as concrete and specific as possible.

Continue to chart this conversation. It is helpful to put dates at the top of the chart to identify the time period to which the group is referring. (5–10 minutes)

Continue looking back from the “projected present” and discuss how you addressed the starting place and how you moved from that to the projected present.

Everyone must talk in ***past tense***.

Directly relate the previous description of how it looked when it started.

Consider discussing how, when, with what resources, and by whom. (5–10 minutes)

Return to the “projected present” and discuss whether it can get any better than it is or if this is as good as it could possibly be. Again, think about how it will look, sound, and feel if it can get even better. (5 minutes)

Whole group reflection: Ask members to individually reflect about what stood out for them——successes and areas that might need to be revisited, refined, or improved. Open it up to a whole group discussion around next steps.

Debrief the process. (10 minutes)

# Finishing Up

The following activities are meant to tie together what you've learned in your journey toward promise and personalization. Recognizing that there is no ending to the process of change in service of students, these activities will pull out what the future may look like for your school, and how the work will go on.

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# What Is Our School's Legacy?

## **Purpose:**

To share and scrutinize our school's story for rituals, symbols, and events that reflect our core values and beliefs.

## **Time Allotted:**

75–90 minutes

## **Group Format:**

Pairs and small groups

## **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants to bring their documentation binders, as they will want to take notes.

Each small group will need a facilitator to guide the process and a scribe to track the phrases and words that are shared.

## **Process:**

Form groups of four to six.

Read "Symbols and Celebrations That Sustain Education" by Carl Glickman, available on the web at [http://pdonline.ascd.org/pd\\_online/substitute/el200303\\_glickman.html](http://pdonline.ascd.org/pd_online/substitute/el200303_glickman.html) (10 minutes)

Text-rendering experience (50 minutes total)

- First round: Each person shares a passage from the document that he/she thinks/feels is particularly significant. (15 minutes)
- Second round: Each person shares a phrase or sentence that he/she thinks/feels is particularly significant. The scribe records each phrase. (10 minutes)
- Third round: Each person shares the word that he/she thinks/feels is particularly significant. The scribe records each word. (5 minutes)

The group discusses what they heard and what it says about the document. (10 minutes)

The group shares the words that emerged and any new insights about the document. (5 minutes)

The group debriefs the text-rendering process. (5 minutes)

## **Reflection:**

What are the rituals, symbols, stories, words, and events that reflect your school's core values and beliefs about academic achievement for all students?

What behaviors and practices do you exhibit that reflect these core values and beliefs?

What now?

## ***Sustaining the Legacy***

### **Purpose:**

To consider the school culture, structure, and leadership capacity required for sustaining a vision of promise and personalization.

### **Time Allotted:**

One hour and 40 minutes

### **Group Format:**

Individuals, triads, whole group

### **Facilitation Tips:**

Remind participants that schools are not static. Students change and teachers change, as do school leaders. This activity is designed for schools to consider change over the long haul, beyond individual leaders and teachers.

*“Sustainable improvement depends on successful leadership. But making leadership sustainable is difficult too... Better quality education and leadership that will benefit all students and last over time require that we address their basic sustainability. If the first challenge of change is to ensure that it's desirable and the second challenge is to make it doable, then the biggest challenge is to make it durable and sustainable. What does sustainability mean? What does it demand of us?”*

*—Sustainable Leadership by Andy Hargreaves and Dean Fink*

### **Process:**

Ask individuals to write in their journals reflecting on these two questions: If you were to leave this school what part of the story would you take with you? If you were to leave this school today, what would you leave of yourself? (10 minutes)

In triads, allow time for each participant to share. Capture words, phrases, and images that come up on newsprint. (10 minutes)

Ask individuals to reflect on what story students might tell about their school experience five years from now. (3 minutes)

In triads, share student stories. (10 minutes)

Share one or two of the most compelling stories with the whole group. Capture these stories on newsprint. (20 minutes)

Next ask triads to consider the following question, if everyone were to leave this school, what would be left of this story? Encourage them to identify the enduring qualities and traits that create the school culture. (10 minutes)

Depending on the size of your group, you can either stay in triads or have triads create groups of six for this next step. Ask groups to describe the next chapter of their story for sustaining the work that they have started around personalization and powerful teaching and learning. Ask them to think about how they might engage colleagues, students, and community in taking those next steps for sustaining the work. (20 minutes)

Create the title for the next chapter of your school's story. Share with the whole group verbally or using a gallery walk. These titles can be used to create a "next step action plan for sustainability." (10 minutes)

Debrief. (5 minutes)

*Micki Evans, 2003.*

## Teacher Leadership Resources

Cushman, K. (January 1993) "So Now What, Managing the Change Process," *Horace*.

Cushman, K. (March 1997) "Essential Leadership in the School Change Process," *Horace*.

Crowther, F., Kaagan, S., Ferguson, M., & Hann, L. (2002) *Developing Teacher Leaders: How Teacher Leadership Enhances School Success*, Corwin Press.

Garmston, R., & Wellman, B. (1999) *The Adaptive School: Developing and Facilitating Collaborative Groups*, Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Gehrke, N., & Romerdahl, N. S. (1997) "Teacher Leaders: Making a Difference in Schools," *Kappa Delta Pi*.

Katzenmeyer, M., & Moller, G. (2001) *Awakening the Sleeping Giant: Helping Teachers Develop as Leaders*, Corwin Press.

Lambert, L. (1998) *Building Leadership Capacity in Schools*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Lambert, L., (1997) *Who Will Save Our Schools? Teachers as Constructivist Leaders*, Corwin Press.

O'Hair, M. J. & Odell, S. J., Editors (1995) *Educating Teachers for Leadership and Change, Teacher Education Yearbook III*, Corwin Press.

Short, P. & Greer, J. T. (1997) *Leadership in Empowered Schools, Themes from Innovative Efforts*, Merrill, Prentice Hall.

Wagner, T. (January 2001) "Leadership for Learning: An Action Theory of School Change," *Phi Delta Kappan*.