

## **The Center for Secondary School Redesign Performance Assessment Work Group (PAWG) Overview & Essential Tools/Resources**

### **PURPOSE:**

PAWG acts as an incubator for the development of reflective teacher practice. Members hone skills in the creation, refinement and validation of performance assessments. Looking collaboratively at student work is the centerpiece of PAWG as is the calibration of student work. PAWG members become skilled facilitators and local experts. PAWG members act as capacity builders back at their schools.

### **PROCESS:**

The Performance Assessment Work Group Development strives to develop the necessary skills and knowledge in stakeholders so that they can successfully move along the following continuum:

- **Stage 1:** Majority of teachers work in isolation
- **Stage 2:** Some teachers/departments have built capacity to discuss, give feedback and look at student work collaboratively
- **Stage 3:** Most departments have capacity to look at student work; teachers routinely tune adult and student work; some students are involved
- **Stage 4:** Calibration and validation take place in most departments; increasing number of students involved
- **Stage 5:** Calibration and validation are now the norm; students are routinely engaged

### **LESSONS LEARNED: HOW PAWGS CAN LEAD TO WHOLE SCHOOL CHANGE:**

- *From Isolation to Whole-School: The Power of a Coach & Facilitator* - The school needs to plan how the whole faculty can learn from the work of PAWG not just a small group. The capacity building plan needs to be developed locally and be submitted to CSSR once the PAWG work becomes established. Sustainability needs to be approached earlier in PAWG so the schools are setting up sustainable systems for integrating PAWG work on a regular basis. This can be a part of the capacity building plan. PAWG Facilitators should have the time/ flexibility to be able to be “on call” to PAWG members for problem solving local situations, providing extended support. In planning PAWG session’s lead facilitators need to remember the following:
  - Create an annual meeting schedule, which rotates around schools well in advance.
  - Schedule the word day to be five-six hours long; build time in for travel
  - Develop the agenda and pre-work well in advance
  - School location plays a key role in agenda planning
  - Circulate meeting locations and agendas ahead of time.
  - Remember purpose of meetings – balancing depth, transparent facilitation, flexibility, responsive facilitation, developing trust, putting relationships first.

- *Who Should Attend* - A representative for PAWG who has a strong working relationship with administrators in the school building (i.e. principal, department lead or teacher) who can also attend school administrative team meetings to share PAWG work. Schools need to commit to the release time needed for sustained PAWG attendance. A lead facilitator/coordinator should take responsibility for PAWG. Within sessions members can take on facilitation tasks and increase their facilitation skills. Coaching of PAWG members is a regular part of the PAWG agenda.
- *Building Capacity & Skills* - At each meeting the PAWG rep should bring with them one or more teachers representing the content area being covered in the session.
- *Role Clarity* - The PAWG representative needs clarity about their role in capacity building and help in developing a school capacity building plan.
- *Commit the Time Needed* - The PAWG representative needs venues to share PAWG work back at school beyond their department – with full faculty, via departments, with admin etc on a regularly scheduled basis. The school may choose to have a local PAWG committee as the place to disseminate the work. PAWG work should be an integral piece of the local professional development schedule.

## **CONTENT:**

The protocols that are used and introduced as part of this professional development are:

- Norm development
- Reflections – driving and restraining forces etc
- Icebreakers
- Tuning
- Feedback principles
- Text Protocols
- Problem solving protocols – Consultancy, Peeling the Onion, Issaquah
- Future Protocol
- Calibration
- Validation
- Developing charters

## ***The Power of Protocols***

- A protocol consists of agreed upon guidelines for a conversation. It is the existence of this structure, which everyone understands and has agreed to, that permits a certain kind of conversation to occur — often a kind of conversation that people are not in the habit of having.
- Protocols are vehicles for building the skills — and culture — necessary for collaborative work. Thus, using protocols often allows groups to build trust by actually doing substantive work together.

## Why Should We Use a Protocol?

- A protocol creates a structure that makes it safe to ask challenging questions of one another; it also ensures that there is some equity and parity in terms of how each person's issue is attended to. The presenter has the opportunity not only to reflect on and describe an issue or a dilemma, but also to have interesting questions asked of her/him, AND to gain differing perspectives and new insights. Protocols build in a space for listening, and often give people a license to listen without having to continually respond.
- In schools, many people say that time is of the essence, and time is the one resource that no one seems to have enough of. Experimenting with protocols is one way to make the most of the time people have.
- It is important to remember that the point is not to do the protocol well, but to have in-depth, insightful conversation about teaching and learning.

## How Do Protocols Work?

Protocols set boundaries for our conversations. Protocols set aside time specifically for listening, noticing, thinking, and speaking. The following are basic elements or stages of many protocols that are designed to provide the members of the group time to listen, notice, think, and speak.

## Definitions

**MODERATION:** a process in which a group of teachers, acting as an independent panel, discusses and engages in the collective scoring of student work to reach agreement on a rubric.

**VALIDATION:** is a process in which a group of teachers checks that learning assignments are clearly aligned to standards and that they will accurately measure student performance on the intended standards.

**CALIBRATION:** is a process in which a group of teachers, who work together, reaches consensus on the values in a rubric. As a result all scorers interpret and apply the rubric in the same way and scoring becomes reliable and consistent.

**AUTHENTIC LEARNING:** the learner constructs new knowledge through disciplined inquiry into a problem or topic that has relevance outside of school.

**AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT:** refers to assessment tasks that resemble reading and writing or other work in the real world beyond school.

## Standard Facilitation Steps

There's a lot to think about when you're preparing to facilitate a group using protocols. The following CSSR practices will help you establish an environment conducive to meaningful

collaborative work. Consistency in the first few meetings will develop good habits within the group, and responsibility for these tasks can soon be shared.

1. Plan your agenda and distribute it to the group in advance. Think carefully about how long each item will take and include a few minutes of flex time.
2. Pre-Conference to effectively choose and prepare the appropriate focus question, protocol and student work to achieve your intended results. Expect to spend at least 15-20 minutes on this conversation.
3. Create the space. Make sure everyone in the group can see everyone else. Rearrange furniture if necessary.
4. Review the norms with the group and post them.
5. Prepare the group for active participation. Remind everyone in your group that they should be ready to take some notes during the presentation of work.
6. Review the protocol. Bring copies of your protocol to hand out. If you can't make photocopies, chart the main steps of the protocol on a chart pad or blackboard.
7. Post the presenter's focus question on the board, or ask all participants to write it down.
8. Actively co-facilitate. While one co-facilitator takes the lead on moving through the protocol, the other co-facilitator should watch the process, jump in if things get muddled or off-track, and model focused, positive and deep participation.
9. Trust the protocol. There is often a moment in the protocol when you think, "What should I do now? This is heading for disaster!!" Take a breath and see what the protocol yields, or ask your co-facilitator for some help. Share your concerns during the debrief.
10. Make a basic plan for the next meeting. At a minimum, determine who will bring work for feedback and who will facilitate.
11. Collect written reflections at the end of your meeting so that you can plan effectively for the next one. At the beginning of each meeting, read highlights from the previous reflections in order to create continuity.
12. Debrief with your co-facilitator. Talk about each of your roles and how you can best help the group move forward.

### **Examples of Norms used by PAWG**

These norms are shared only to provide readers with examples. Every work group is different and it is essential that collectively the facilitator and participants create their own unique set of norms to help guide the group towards successful achievement of goals and outcomes.

- Honor our learning and be respectful of the work of the teacher and the student.
- Keep the conversation constructive; avoid judgmental language.
- Trust the process. Follow the steps in the protocol and the time boundaries.
- Be appreciative of the facilitator's role.
- Keep feedback crisp and to the point.
- Spend quality time on the debrief.

## **PAWG Protocols**

### **1. Tuning Protocol**

*(Developed by Joseph McDonald, Coalition of Essential Schools; Revised by David Allen.)*

#### **Description:**

The Tuning Protocol was originally developed as a means for the five high schools in the Coalition of Essential School's Exhibitions Project to receive feedback and fine-tune their developing student assessment systems, including exhibitions, portfolios, and design projects. Recognizing the complexities involved in developing new forms of assessment, the project staff developed the facilitated process to support educators in sharing their students' work (sometimes students brought their own work) and, with colleagues, reflects upon the lessons that are embedded there. This collaborative reflection helps educators design and refine their assessment systems, and supports higher quality student performance. Since its trial run in 1992, the Tuning Protocol has been widely used and adapted for looking at both student and adult work in and among schools across the country.

*Note: If adult work (such as an adult developed document like a lesson plan, rubric, newsletter, etc.) is the focus and there are no student work samples, you may want to consider the Tuning Protocol*

#### **Process:**

**Step 1 - Introduction** (5 minutes) Facilitator briefly introduces protocol goals, guidelines, and schedule

**Step 2 - Presentation** (10-15 minutes) The presenter has the opportunity to share both the context for her work and any supporting documents as warranted, while participants are silent.

- Information about the students and/or the class — what the students tend to be like, where they are in school, where they are in the year.
- Assignment or prompt that generated the student work
- Student learning goals or standards that inform the work

- Samples of student work — photocopies of work, video clips, etc. — with student names removed
- Evaluation format — scoring rubric and or assessment criteria, etc.
- Focusing question for feedback (ex: To what extent does the student work reflect the learning standards? Or, How might the rubric be in closer alignment to the skills and knowledge present in the student work?) is shared and posted for all to see.

**Step 3 - Clarifying Questions** (3-5 minutes) Participants have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions in order to get information that may have been omitted during the presentation and would help them to better understand the work.

- Clarifying questions are matters of fact.
- The facilitator is responsible for making sure that clarifying questions are really clarifying and not warm/cool feedback or suggestions.

**Step 4 - Examining the Work** (10-15 minutes) Participants look closely at the work, making notes on where it seems to be “in tune” or aligned with the stated goals and, guided by the presenter’s focusing question and goals, where there might be a potential disconnect.

*Note: It’s possible that participants could have an additional clarifying question or 2 during this time. If so, the facilitator might offer an additional moment for these to be asked by participants and answered by the presenter.*

**Step 5 - Pause to Silently Reflect on Warm and Cool Feedback** (2-3 minutes) Participants individually review their notes and decide what they would like to contribute to the feedback session. The Presenter is silent and participants do this work silently.

**Step 6 - Warm and Cool Feedback** (10-15 minutes) Participants share feedback with each other while the presenter is silent and takes notes. The feedback generally begins with a few minutes of warm feedback, moves on to a few minutes of cool feedback (sometimes phrased in the form of reflective questions), and then moves back and forth between warm and cool feedback.

- Warm feedback may include comments about how the work presented seems to align with the desired goals; cool feedback may include possible disconnects, gaps, or problems. Often participants offer ideas or suggestions for strengthening the work presented, so long as the suggestions are guided by the presenter’s goals and question.
- It might be helpful for the facilitator to offer prompts for the feedback, such as:
  - Warm feedback
    - “It seems important...”
    - “Considering the goal, I appreciate...”
    - “I want to make sure to keep...”
  - Cool feedback
    - “I wonder if...”
    - “One way to more closely align the goal/purpose is ...”
- The facilitator may need to remind participants of the presenter’s focusing question.

- Presenter is silent, listening in on the conversation and taking notes.

**Step 7 - Reflection** (3-5 minutes) The Presenter rejoins the group and shares her/his new thinking about what she/he learned from the participants' feedback.

- This is not a time for the presenter to defend her/himself, but is instead a time for the presenter to reflect aloud on anything that seemed particularly interesting.
- Facilitator may need to remind participants that once the work has been returned to the presenter, there will be no more feedback offered.

**Step 8 - Debrief** (3-5 minutes) The Facilitator leads discussion about this tuning experience.

## 2. Calibration Protocol

**Purpose:** To calibrate the scoring of student work and explore instructional implications.

**Materials & Time Frame:** An individual teacher or a group of teachers assign a task and assessment. They bring 3 samples of the resulting student work and the evaluation they will use for the group. Each participant should have a packet containing the three exemplars of typical student work along with the rubric/checklist or evaluation tool evaluation. (Approximately 65 min.)

### Process:

*Step 1* - The facilitator reviews & walks the group through the calibration process as outlined in the protocol. (2 minutes)

*Step 2* - The teacher passes out the work and shares the context briefly. (3 minutes)

*Step 3* - In silence the participants examine the materials. (5 minutes)

*Step 4* - The group asks clarifying questions about the materials and process. (5 minutes)

*Step 5* - Working in silence the participants independently read and annotates 3 student work samples noting evidence of meeting the standard. Participants record their observations, making notes. The presenter can participate. (15 minutes)

*Step 6* - The facilitator invites each member to share his or her annotations and observations of the work referring to evidence in the student work. Group members listen as each participant shares their work. Notes are charted but there is no discussion. (15 minutes)

*Step 7* - Each member uses the evaluation provided to score the 3 work samples. Members individually share their scores and a group scoring chart is created. (10 minutes)

*Step 8* - The group looks at where consensus exists on scoring and discusses difference in scoring and if consensus can be reached. (10 minutes)

*Step 9* - Debrief the activity by discussing each of the questions below:

- What did we notice about scoring the student work and checklist?
- What might be the next steps for supporting the work of these students?
- How might the teacher improve the assigned task, prompt and instructions?

- What are the implications for our practice as teachers? (10 minutes)

*Step 10* - Thank the participants for their work.

### 3. Validation Protocol

Purpose: The validation protocol has been developed to analyze teacher-developed units of study against a clear set of outside standards. The protocol provides presenters with focused, detailed feedback on their work, which can be used for revision. Additionally, work, which reaches high standards, can be shared with other teachers and amongst networks of schools. The activity takes roughly 60 minutes to complete.

#### Step 1 - Facilitator sets the stage (5 minutes)

- Review the task and protocol

#### Step 2 - Presenter shares the task/assignment and the context for the work followed by clarifying Questions being asked and answered (5 minutes)

- Clarifying questions are matters of fact

#### Step 3 - Examination of the Task / Assessment (5 minutes)

- Participants review the task / assessment
- Additional clarifying questions are asked and answered as needed

#### Step 4 - Presenter leaves the group (15 minutes)

- Participants complete the validation checklist below individually.
- Participants prepare feedback individually by making written notes.

**Validation Checklist:** Participants consider to what extent the task/assessment instrument is aligned with the following standard. The validation checklist was inspired by work done for the New Hampshire Department of Education by the Center for Collaborative Education (CCE) in its Quality Performance Assessment work.

#### A. Alignment. The task, assignment or assessment is aligned to...

Yes No Partially

... Specific content standards (or intended parts of content standards).

... 21st century skills by including multiple modalities (if appropriate).

#### B. Identify and check levels of Depth of Knowledge [DOK]

Yes No Partially

**DOK 1:** Includes recall; memorization; simple understanding of a word or phrase

**DOK 2:** Covers level 1 plus: paraphrase; summarize; interpret; infer; classify; organize; compare; and determine fact from fiction.

**DOK 3:** Students must support their thinking by citing references from text or other sources. Students are asked to go beyond the text to analyze, generalize, or connect ideas. Requires deeper knowledge. Items may require abstract reasoning, inferences between and across readings, application of prior knowledge, or text support for an analytical judgment about a text.

**DOK 4:** Requires higher-order thinking, including complex reasoning, planning,



and developing of concepts. Usually applies to an extended task or project. Examples: evaluates several works by the same author; critiques an issue across time periods or researches topic/issue from different perspectives; longer investigations or research projects.

**C. Quality of Task Design. The task, assignment or assessment...**

Yes No Partially

- ... Focuses on what is intended to be demonstrated—will highlight what the student knows and can do related to the chosen standards and benchmarks.

**D. Clarity and Focus. The task, assignment or assessment...**

Yes No Partially

- ... Addresses an essential issue, big idea, or key concept or skill of the unit/course.
- ... Is linked to ongoing instruction (within a unit of study/course).
- ... Clearly indicates what the student is being asked to do.
- ... Includes what will be assessed individually by the student (even if it is a group task).

**E. Student Engagement. The task, assignment or assessment...**

Yes No Partially

- ... Provides for ownership and decision-making, requiring the student to be actively engaged.
- ... Focuses on significant content and addresses authentic problems and issues from the world outside the classroom.

**F. Fairness...**

Yes No Partially

- ...The task, assignment or assessment is fair and unbiased in language and design.
- ...The rubric or scoring guide is clear.
- ...Material is familiar to students from identifiable cultural, gender, linguistic, and other groups.
- ...The task is free of stereotypes.
- ...All students have access to needed resources (e.g., Internet, calculators, spell check, etc.)
- ...Assessment conditions are the same for all students.
- ...The task can be reasonably completed under the specified conditions.
- ...The task, assignment or assessment allows for accommodations for students with specific learning plans.

**G. Adherence to Principles of Universal Design**

Yes No Partially

- ...Instructions are free of wordiness and irrelevant information.
- ...Instructions are free of unusual words students may not understand.
- ...Format/layout conveys focus of expected tasks and products.
- ...Format clearly indicates what actual questions and prompts are.
- ...Questions are marked with graphic cues (bullets, numbers, etc.).
- ...Design is consistent throughout

## H. Criteria and Levels.

Yes No Partially

...Rubric(s) or scoring guide(s) assess all intended parts of content standards.

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**Step 5 - Validation Review:** Participants share each section of the validation checklist, discuss differences in scoring and reach consensus on the task/assessment. Participants discuss feedback and questions, which would be useful to the presenting teacher. (15 minutes)

**Step 6 – Feedback:** Presenter returns to the group. Participants share their feedback on the work. It is helpful to begin with “warm feedback” (what seems to be in alignment) and then move to “cool feedback” (wonderings and probing questions). (10 minutes)

**Step 7 – Debrief:** The facilitator leads a debrief. The group then discusses how the protocol may have affected their own practice and its usefulness as a tool for developing fair and effective assignments and assessment.

## **Collaborative Practices Training**

Collaborative Practices, as defined in the CSSR i3 project, is the development of a collaborative community based on the model for the development of collaborative skills and practices. It is important because it provides teachers and administrators with a structure for sharing their work with an eye toward incorporating student-centered, inquiry-based teaching strategies and authentic assessment practices.

Creating a student-driven, personalized learning environments is at the core of the i3 New England Network mission. Achieving success requires teachers, students and administrators to develop skills specifically designed to support the creation and long-term success of collaborative learning communities.

Participants in the collaborative skills and practices training will experience firsthand the creation of a professional learning community, which contributes directly to increased student learning and achievement. The professional development focuses on learning the concepts, habits, tools, protocols and skills that lead to authentic reflective practice and facilitative/shared leadership so that participants can then share the learnings back in their own learning environment. The consistent use of protocols (validations, tunings, LASW, dilemmas, data analysis, calibrations) at monthly PAWG meetings has been perhaps the single most significant stimulus to the widespread recognition of the importance and usefulness of facilitation skills (and protocols) at network schools.

The training focuses on the following:

- The role of inquiry in our work
- Issues of equity in our school communities and practice
- Improving student learning and achievement through collaborative instructional strategies and protocols in the classroom
- Using proven protocols to keep meetings focused, stimulating, collaborative and productive

## **SAMPLE: COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES TRAINING FLYER**

### **Overview:**

Creating student-centered, personalized learning environments is the heart of the mission of the i-3 network. Reaching that goal requires teachers, students and administrators to develop skills specifically designed to support the creation and long-term success of collaborative learning communities. This will be the focus of our training.

### **The Work:**

Participants in the Collaborative Practices Training will experience firsthand the creation of a professional learning community--which contributes directly to increased student learning and achievement. We will learn the concepts, habits, tools, protocols and skills that lead to authentic reflective practice and facilitative leadership—and plan how to take this learning back to our own school setting.

### **Seminar Goals:**

- The role of inquiry in our work
- Issues of equity in our school communities and practice
- Improving student learning and achievement through collaborative instructional strategies and protocols
- Using proven protocols to keep meetings focused, stimulating, collaborative and productive

### **Participants will learn and practice...**

- Protocols for engaging in reflective discourse about ideas contained in texts;
- Techniques and protocols for giving and receiving productive feedback
- A variety of protocols for examining student and adult work collaboratively
- Strategies for facilitating group development and processes

### **Guiding Questions—all related to developing student ownership of learning**

- What is a professional learning community?
- How do we foster meaningful adult collaboration and exchange at our own school?
- What structural and cultural conditions ensure educational equity for all student?
- How does reflective practice support our professional growth as educators?

### **Details:**

- The training is open to all faculty and students in i-3 schools
- To get the full benefit from the training participants must attend all 3 days
- We encourage schools to enroll a team which can then form the nucleus of an on-site continuing collaborative practices group or enhance a group that are already operating.

## **Resources and Research**



Allen, D., Blythe, T., & Powell, B. (2008). *Looking Together at Student Work*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Teachers College Press, Columbia University. New York & London.

Allen, D., & Blythe, T. (2004). *The Facilitators Book of Questions*. Teachers College Press, Columbia University. New York & London.

McDonald, J., Mohr, N., Dichter, A., & McDonald, E. (2007). *The Power of Protocols*. Teachers College Press, Columbia University. New York & London.

School Reform Initiative: [www.schoolreforminitiative.org](http://www.schoolreforminitiative.org)

Weinbaum, A., Allen, D., Blythe, T., Simon, K., Seidel, S., & Rubin, C. (2004). *Teaching as Inquiry*. Teachers College Press, Columbia University. New York & London.