

Agenda

Atlanta • July 9–11

Tuesday, July 9

6:30–8:00 a.m.	Registration	
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Tim Brown <i>Setting the Stage: Understanding the Big Ideas and Foundational Blocks of the PLC at Work Process</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Panel Discussion —Presenters provide practical answers to your most pressing questions.	

Wednesday, July 10

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Registration	
	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:45 a.m.	Keynote —Mike Mattos <i>Challenging Educational Mythology: Proven Practices and Brutal Facts in Creating Great Schools</i>	
9:45–10:00 a.m.	Break	
10:00–11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	
11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Lunch (on your own)	
1:00–2:30 p.m.	Breakout Sessions	
2:30–2:45 p.m.	Break	
2:45–3:45 p.m.	Team Time —Presenters are available to aid in your collaborative team discussions.	

Thursday, July 11

7:00–8:00 a.m.	Continental Breakfast	
8:00–9:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	
9:30–9:45 a.m.	Break	
9:45–11:45 a.m.	Keynote —Robert Eaker <i>Would It Be Good Enough For Your Own Child?</i>	

Agenda is subject to change.

Breakouts at a Glance

Presenters & Titles	Tuesday, July 9		Wednesday, July 10		Thursday, July 11
	10:15–11:45 a.m.	1:15–2:45 p.m.	10:15–11:45 a.m.	1:15–2:45 p.m.	8:00–9:30 a.m.
Tim Brown					
Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset	X			X	
Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices		X			X
Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration			X		
Brian K. Butler					
What About Us? The PLC at Work Process in Early Childhood	X				
Collaborating in the Core in Elementary Schools		X		X	
Ensuring Teams Engage in the Right Work			X		X
Luis F. Cruz					
English Learners and PLCs	X				
I Like What I'm Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?		X			
Remembering Rick DuFour: Embracing the "Tight and Loose" of the PLC Process			X		
Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don't Learn				X	
I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful					X

Robert Eaker					
Friday Night in America: A Commonsense Approach to Improving Student Achievement	X				
A Focus on Learning: What Would It Look Like If We Really Meant It?		X			
Aligning the Work of a Professional Learning Community: Central Office, Schools, and Teams			X		
Developing a Stretch Culture				X	
William M. Ferriter					
Digital Tools for Differentiation	X			X	
Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher		X			
Integrating Opportunities for Student Self-Assessment in Your Classroom			X		X
Chris Jakicic					
Too Much to Teach, Too Much to Learn	X				
Simplifying Assessment Design		X		X	
Writing Quality Questions for Common Formative Assessments			X		X
Timothy D. Kanold					
Heartprint: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!	X				X
The PLC Life Adventure of Central Office and School-Site Leadership!		X			
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!			X		
Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Assessment, Homework, and Grading!				X	

Michelle Marrillia					
The Case for Coaches in Professional Learning Communities	X			X	
Do Your Common Formative Assessments Really Change Your Practice? Turning Data into Successful Secondary Classroom Instruction		X			
Urban Turnaround: From Priority to Proficiency			X		X
Mike Mattos					
The Essential Work of Teacher Teams in a Professional Learning Community	X				
Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process		X			
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools			X		
Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools				X	
Personalized Learning in a PLC at Work: Developing Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions					X
Anthony Muhammad					
Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn	X				
Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change		X			
Maria Nielsen					
The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!	X		X		
Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning		X			X

Digging Into Data Without Getting Bugged Down				X	
Bob Sonju					
Getting Crystal Clear on Question One: Boosting the Efficacy of Assessments and Interventions	X				
Help Our Team! Working Together to Solve Common Team Challenges		X		X	
The Big Rocks: What Effective Teams Do to Increase Student Learning			X		X
Kenneth C. Williams					
12 Angry Men: The Power of Productive Conflict	X				X
At Risk or Underserved? Focusing on What Really Matters in Student Learning		X		X	
Failure to Launch: Avoiding the Common Pitfalls of Collaborative Teams			X		

Agenda is subject to change.

Session Descriptions

Tim Brown

[KEYNOTE] Setting the Stage: Understanding the Big Ideas and Foundational Blocks of the PLC at Work Process

This keynote is a call to action to energize individual and collective efforts to create schools of high expectations through the PLC process. In 1997, University of Tennessee researchers S. Paul Wright, Sandra P. Horn, and William L. Sanders reported, “As a result of analyzing the achievement scores of more than 100,000 students across hundreds of schools, the conclusion is that the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher.” More recent studies by Dr. John Hattie have concluded that not only are teachers the key contributors to student learning, but their impact is most profound when they work together to evaluate their effect on student learning. To attain high achievement in every classroom, unsurpassed collaboration must become a school’s priority.

Tim Brown sets the stage for the next two and a half days of learning by discussing the three big ideas of the PLC at Work process, their connection to beliefs and practices, and what it means to commit to a focus on learning, to work collaboratively, and to be accountable to a school’s mission, vision, values, and goals.

Student Data Notebooks: Developing Ownership, Motivation, and a Growth Mindset

Educators in schools with a focus on learning promote a strong sense of self-efficacy in their students. Several recent studies show this is one of the greatest factors of student motivation and engagement. Participants examine the essential characteristics for building student self-efficacy and a growth mindset through data notebooks. Tim Brown shares products teams have developed to engage and empower students in self-reporting and reflection.

This session addresses these questions:

- What are the key components of a highly motivated and engaged classroom?
- What products do teams create to improve student learning and ensure self-efficacy in the PLC process?
- How can teachers effectively use these products to help students own their learning?

Raising Questions and Finding Answers in Our Grading Practices

Talking about grading practices is often a touchy subject, full of emotions, opinions, and personal beliefs. However, when schools make the shift from a focus on teaching to a focus on learning, they must be willing to examine policies, practices, and guidelines to see if they support the principles of learning. Tim Brown shows how a staff can engage educators in a collaborative process committed to grading practices that are aligned with learning outcomes.

Participants discuss these essential questions:

- What do principles of learning, student motivation, and grading have in common?
- What are the reasons and rationale behind changes in grading practices?
- What grading practices and guidelines do successful teams and schools implement?

Getting on the Same Page: Establishing Collective Commitments About Learning and Collaboration

Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, argues that explicitly stated values are one of the most powerful steps teams can take toward becoming exemplary. Developing a common vision of instruction, assessment, and interventions at the classroom, team, and schoolwide levels are critical steps in the PLC process. Tim Brown shares strategies and provides helpful examples for developing collective commitments and common vision.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding the importance of developing explicit commitments with members of a team
- Participating in strategies for developing collective commitments as a team
- Exploring processes and protocols that make values more than a one-time event

Brian K. Butler

What About Us? The PLC at Work Process in Early Childhood

For years, schools have focused on implementing the PLC at Work process in their K–12 systems, and many preschool programs want to know how to make this process work for their schools and children, too. Brian K. Butler, former principal of the 2016 DuFour Award-winning Mason Crest Elementary, discusses how his former school adapted the PLC model for its preschool students. By implementing collaborative and data-driven processes of PLCs, Mason Crest Elementary combined a preschool special education class with a general education preschool Head Start class and dispelled the myth that students with early learning challenges could not only achieve developmental milestones, but even exceed them.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Learning the administrative team's role in supporting the preschool collaborative team
- Experiencing the power of common assessments and acquiring the preschool team data analysis protocol used to assess effective practices and to flexibly and seamlessly group students during their play activities to provide appropriate support and challenge
- Understanding how shifting teacher mindsets and teacher talk ensures high expectations for all
- Exploring how children still learn through play and how teachers can maximize their use of that time

Collaborating in the Core in Elementary Schools

It is critical that every student receive high-quality instruction from the outset to meet the goal of academic achievement for all. To ensure high-quality Tier 1 instruction for students, adult learning in a school needs to be intentional and inclusive. How is professional development viewed in your school? Is it a one-shot, sit-and-get lecture, a one-time workshop, or a multifaceted approach? The overriding question for teachers and administrators is, How do we ensure high-quality Tier 1 core instruction and learning for all students through focused, collective, ongoing, and job-embedded professional development?

Participants in this session can expect to:

- Understand the importance of building a common language, common knowledge, and common expectations around job-embedded professional development through structured, whole-staff learning opportunities.
- View the process and purpose of involving all staff (culture) in building (structure) common collaborative time into the master schedule.
- Understand the purpose and importance of planning grade-level team meetings and having the opportunity to see some of these teams in action.
- Examine a lesson plan model that focuses on differentiation in Tier 1.
- Explore the idea of co-teaching and the four models that allow staff to continue learning and reflecting together in real time.

Ensuring Teams Engage in the Right Work

Taking a page from *School Improvement for All: A How-To Guide for Doing the Right Work* (Solution Tree Press, 2017) by Sharon Kramer and Sarah Schuhl, participants delve deep into the “right work” of teacher teams. Kramer and Schuhl write, “The best way to describe, clarify, and monitor the task of teams is to delineate the products that they would create from answering the four questions” that drive the work of collaborative teams. Participants gain absolute clarity on what this looks, feels, and sounds like at the team level.

Outcomes for this session include:

- Gaining an understanding of the impact that doing the right work has on culture and student achievement
- Acquiring a team protocol for complementing defined tasks, products, and artifacts that come out of answering the four critical questions of a PLC
- Assessing team progress on each task
- Observing a team using artifacts and products to complete a task

Luis F. Cruz

English Learners and PLCs

Luis F. Cruz shares how schools use PLC strategies to help English learner populations flourish. This session details PLC components administrative and teacher leaders use to close the achievement gap for students learning English as a second language. Dr. Cruz shows how taskforce leadership can reculture and restructure, while introducing best practices to increase learning outcomes for all students. Learn the seven steps an EL taskforce can initiate to ensure students learning English as a second language are included in the “all means all” mantra that defines a school’s fundamental purpose of learning for every student.

Participants discover how:

- Teacher-led task forces increase academic performance for English learners.
- PLC practices can highlight stark realities when English learners are not learning.
- Adults change their expectations and behaviors when listening to the needs of English learners, resulting in significant improvements in student achievement.

I Like What I'm Hearing! So How Do We Initiate Our PLC Journey?

Research from academia and accounts from educators worldwide confirm that PLCs, when implemented effectively, increase high levels of learning for every student. However, questions remain. Who is responsible for initiating a PLC? How does a team establish the foundational pillars of a PLC? How does this process take shape? Is it normal to expect staff resistance to this process and is there a difference between rational and irrational forms of resistance? Luis F. Cruz explains in practical terms the *who*, *why*, and *how* associated with the PLC process.

Participants in this session learn:

- How to initiate a PLC process
- The role of a guiding coalition
- How to establish the foundation of a PLC

Remembering Rick DuFour: Embracing the “Tight and Loose” of the PLC Process

Throughout his professional life, Dr. Richard DuFour shared important insights aimed at guiding educators in their quest to continuously strengthen implementation of the PLC process. One of his most notable keynotes captured the essence of which aspects of the PLC process must be tight and which could be loose. Join Luis F. Cruz as he celebrates the life of Rick DuFour by reminding audiences of Rick's message and his purpose of ensuring learning for *all* students.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Understanding why teams adopting a collaborative culture is a “must do” in the PLC process
- Learning why ensuring a guaranteed and viable curriculum is essential to the PLC process
- Exploring why allowing teachers the “defined autonomy” to teach in the manner they feel most effective is a loose aspect of the PLC process

Taping Before Painting: Taking the Critical Steps to Respond Collectively When Students Don't Learn

The third critical question of a PLC—What do we do when students don't learn?—often stumps teachers and administrators. Luis F. Cruz showcases methods that schools across the country use to guarantee effective collaboration (taping the room) to ensure an effective collective response when students do not learn (painting the room). Participants learn how the PLC and RTI processes complement each other in increasing academic achievement for all students.

Participants in this session learn:

- How teacher teams effectively collaborate and respond when students do not learn
- Ways to ensure a guaranteed and viable curriculum
- The critical role of common assessments

I Am Sold on PLCs: Practical Tools and Directions to Be Successful

As educators initiate an effective PLC process, they need practical tools to begin and enhance their journey. After leaving this institute, educators may discover that staff back at their site need to be convinced that the PLC process is the most practical path to take in the collective quest to accelerate learning for all students. Luis F. Cruz shares articles, templates, activities, and videos to provide administrative and teacher leaders the necessary tools to amplify improvement at their site.

Participants in this session learn:

- The difference between rational and irrational forms of adult resistance and how to address each
- That effective leadership is an art *and* a science and how to maneuver in both directions
- Practical actions to accelerate the PLC process

Robert Eaker

[KEYNOTE] Would It Be Good Enough for Your Own Child?

After five decades of strong and consistent research, the question of what an effective school is no longer in doubt. The central question facing educational leaders is, “Are we committed to embedding practices for *all* students that are as effective as the educational practices we would want for our own child?” This session emphasizes research-based practices that comprise the Professional Learning Community at Work framework which, when implemented with specificity and fidelity, ensures high levels of learning for *all* students.

Friday Night in America: A Commonsense Approach to Improving Student Achievement

Teachers already know more about how to ensure student learning than they may realize. Band directors, art teachers, coaches, and other singletons regularly employ successful strategies in nonacademic school settings. In particular, tactics football coaches use to win on the gridiron on Friday nights are similar to efforts school teams use in the academic arena. Robert Eaker reviews practices that lead to improved student learning across the board. He shows how teacher teams can “suit up” with powerful strategies to triumph every school day.

A Focus on Learning: What Would It Look Like If We Really Meant It?

There is a fundamental difference between schools that function as professional learning communities and their more traditional counterparts: a shift from a focus on teaching and covering content to a focus on learning for every student, skill by skill. While few would disagree with the importance of student learning, some schools struggle with exactly how to embed practices that promote student success in the classroom. This session focuses on specific strategies schools, teams, and teachers use to enhance student success in schools that *really mean it* when they proclaim they want all students to learn.

Aligning the Work of a Professional Learning Community: Central Office, Schools, and Teams

A districtwide professional learning community is more than a sum of individual parts. A high-performing school district that functions as a PLC reflects a thoughtful alignment and integration of work at the central office level, in individual schools, and in teacher teams. While highlighting the efforts of highly successful school districts, Robert Eaker describes how these districts organize and align at each level to implement professional learning community concepts and practices districtwide.

Developing a Stretch Culture

If the goal of achieving high levels of learning for all students is to be realized, then schools must develop a culture that stretches the aspirations and performance levels of students and adults alike. Robert Eaker focuses on cultural shifts PLCs make while developing a *stretch culture*. He pays particular attention to assessment and providing students with additional time and support to achieve high academic benchmarks.

William M. Ferriter

Digital Tools for Differentiation

If schools are truly working to ensure success for every student, learning experiences must be differentiated to meet the needs of individual students. The challenge, however, rests in making differentiation doable. While few teachers doubt the importance of differentiating, many struggle to make customized learning spaces a reality.

In this presentation, Solution Tree author and full-time classroom teacher Bill Ferriter introduces participants to a range of digital tools that can be used to:

- Track progress by student and by standard in a differentiated classroom.
- Provide structure for differentiated classrooms.
- Facilitate initial attempts at remediation and enrichment in a differentiated classroom.

Small Schools and Singletons: Structuring Meaningful Professional Learning Teams for Every Teacher

The PLC concept resonates with most educators, but making collaborative learning work in small schools or for singleton teachers can be challenging. In this session, participants explore four different models for creating meaningful professional learning teams for singletons and teachers in small schools: 1) the creation of vertical teams studying skills that cross content areas, 2) using interdisciplinary teams to focus on addressing the engagement levels of at-risk students, 3) designing class loads that allow teachers to teach the same subjects, and 4) using electronic tools to pair teachers with peers working in the same subject area.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss common structural barriers that make collaboration more difficult for singleton teachers or teachers in small schools.
- Examine four potential models for creating meaningful professional learning teams for singleton teachers or teachers in small schools.
- Develop the beginnings of an action plan for incorporating singleton teachers or teachers in small schools into the PLC process.

Integrating Opportunities for Student-Self Assessment in Your Classroom

School assessment experts Rick Stiggins and Jan Chappuis once argued that creating opportunities for students—particularly those who struggle academically—to collect evidence that they are making progress toward mastering important outcomes is a moral imperative that we simply cannot ignore. “Are we skilled enough,” they wrote, “to use classroom assessment to either keep all learners from losing hope to begin with or to rebuild that hope once it has been destroyed?” Their point was clear: In grade-driven spaces, many students never have the opportunity to feel successful in school.

That point resonated with Solution Tree author and sixth-grade classroom teacher Bill Ferriter, who had always been dissatisfied with the grade-driven work being done in his classroom. This session introduces participants to the tangible steps Bill has taken to integrate opportunities for self-assessment into his classroom in an attempt to ensure that every student has the chance to see themselves as capable learners.

Participants in this session:

- Discuss the important role self-assessment plays in learning.
- Explore simple self-assessment behaviors that can be integrated into any classroom.
- Learn about common challenges in integrating student self-assessment into the classroom.

Chris Jakicic

Too Much to Teach, Too Much to Learn

What do we want our students to know and be able to do? This question serves as the foundation for the work of a PLC and guides teams on what to assess and respond to. Chris Jakicic shows why identifying essential standards is necessary to having a guaranteed and viable curriculum and to increasing student achievement. Participants explore strategies teams can use to select essential standards and ways to use them in their work.

Simplifying Assessment Design

Common formative assessments written, administered, and used by collaborative teams can have a significant impact on student achievement. This session focuses on helping participants avoid making common mistakes in assessment design that often lead to misusing data in response to students' learning needs. Participants learn how to unwrap standards into learning targets and how to write an assessment plan to gain reliable data.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how unwrapping standards into learning targets improves the quality of formative assessments.
- Learn how to choose the right type of assessment to match the rigor of learning targets.
- Discover how to create an assessment plan that leads to a more valid and reliable assessment.

Writing Quality Questions for Common Formative Assessments

If educators base teaching decisions on assessment results, how do they know their assessment items provide accurate information? Participants explore ways to write items that translate into better information about student learning. In particular, they gain strategies for assessing more rigorous learning targets.

Participants can expect to:

- Become familiar with writing better-constructed response and multiple-choice questions to provide them with more accurate information about what students need next.
- Explore ways to choose or develop stimulus information to increase the rigor of an assessment item.
- Learn how to develop quality rubrics that score questions in a way that provides information to teachers, collaborative teams, and students.

Timothy D. Kanold

Heartprint: Living a Fully Engaged, High-Energy, Well-Balanced Professional Life!

Within the culture of a PLC school, the relational expectations, give and take, and sometimes chaotic noise of daily interactions can be overwhelming and exhausting. By understanding one's daily heartprint, educators are better able to inspire, engage with, and influence students and colleagues season after season.

Timothy D. Kanold draws from the wisdom of his book *HEART! Fully Forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* (2018 IPPY Gold Medal winner) to provide research, insights, and tools from thought leaders inside and outside education. He examines ways for all educators to lead high-energy, happy, and well-balanced PLC professional lives each and every day.

Participants can expect to:

- Examine the H and the E elements of their HEARTs: their relational Happiness and how to become fully Engaged in their work.
- Discover ways to improve their relational intelligence and impact (heartprint) on others.
- Learn ways to reflect upon, pursue, and sustain a well-balanced, high-energy personal and professional life that can positively affect students and colleagues.

The PLC Life Adventure of Central Office and School-Site Leadership!

School-site or central office PLC leaders face the challenge of leading others into the great adventure of the PLC life. Yet, they also must weave through and around obstacles that prevent full, ongoing implementation of the PLC life in their programs, schools, or districts.

Timothy D. Kanold bases this session on chapter 29, "The Great Adventure," from his best-selling, award-winning book *HEART! Fully forming Your Professional Life as a Teacher and Leader* (2018). He reveals the practical nature of school leadership and how administrators can become heroes within their own PLC adventures.

Dr. Kanold invites participants to identify primary barriers that prevent full implementation of the PLC life. He then facilitates dialogue to help them find meaningful solutions.

Dr. Kanold indicates, "As we become fully formed professionals, we tie our workplace heartprint to the vision and results of our effort in order to promote coherence—and celebrate the difficult daily work of others."

Participants learn how to:

- Lead, create, and inspire the great adventure of the PLC life.
- Help others eliminate barriers and then measure the impact of their daily actions on the PLC life.
- Avoid chaos, disorganization, and randomness that can prevent the coherence needed for full implementation of the PLC culture.

Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Great Instruction and Tasks!

Timothy D. Kanold explores how collaborative teams can improve student achievement in mathematics through the balanced use of lower-level- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks and classroom discourse combined with meaningful formative feedback during instruction. This session is based on his book *Mathematics Instruction and Tasks in a PLC at Work* from Solution Tree's *Every Student Can Learn Mathematics* series (2018).

Dr. Kanold shares six research-affirmed lesson-design criteria essential to student perseverance and sustained effort in mathematics class every day. He shares sample mathematics tasks and online resources for teacher support.

Participants use the PLC mathematics lesson-design model to:

- Define the difference between relevant and meaningful mathematics.
- Consider the effective use of prior knowledge and academic vocabulary activities.
- Examine the balanced use of lower-level- and higher-level-cognitive-demand tasks during class.
- Consider the balanced use of in-class student discourse as part of formative assessment feedback when students get stuck during the lesson.

Your K–12 PLC Mathematics Focus: Assessment, Homework, and Grading!

Timothy D. Kanold explores how mathematics assessment and grading can either inspire or destroy student learning. This session is based on *Mathematics Assessment and Intervention in a PLC at Work* and *Mathematics Homework and Grading in a PLC at Work* (2018). Both are from Solution Tree's *Every Student Can Learn Mathematics* series.

Dr. Kanold reveals eight research-affirmed criteria for creating high-quality unit assessments (quizzes and tests) and the accurate scoring of those assessments. Participants also reflect on and answer the formative question “Now what?” when an assessment is returned to students. The session ends with a brief discussion about research-affirmed criteria for high-quality mathematics homework routines and practices.

Participants in this session:

- Use high-quality mathematics assessment-design criteria for evaluating the quality of current quizzes and tests.
- Develop a protocol for the accurate scoring of all quizzes and tests.
- Develop formative strategies for student response, intervention, and ownership of learning during and at the end of a unit of study.
- Explore research and discussion tools to design highly effective mathematics homework routines and practices.

Michelle Marrillia

The Case for Coaches in Professional Learning Communities

Successful instructional coaches understand the balancing act of working with teams to help ensure the fidelity of the three big ideas of a PLC while also providing the time and support to individual teachers who need it. Learn how a tiered instructional coaching model can help drive the collaborative

culture in your school. Participants will leave with sample coaching plans for training team leaders, specific support systems for struggling teams, and instructional leadership team protocols.

Learning outcomes for this session include:

- Defining the role of coaches in professional learning communities
- Applying practical coaching strategies to develop and support team leaders in a PLC
- Determining next steps in building and sustaining an effective coaching model to support collaborative teams

Do Your Common Formative Assessments Really Change Your Practice? Turning Data Into Successful Secondary Classroom Instruction

School systems are increasingly data-rich, but educators often struggle to use this data to differentiate instruction and provide timely feedback to meet the needs of every student. This session details practical approaches for effective and easy-to-implement reteaching strategies in multiple content areas in secondary classrooms. Michelle Marrillia provides specific examples of creating a system of regrouping and differentiated instruction based on assessment data.

Participants in this session discover:

- How a collaborative team can use data to implement reteaching strategies for students who do not learn the first time
- How to incorporate embedded academic advising for timely feedback
- A spotlight regrouping method for differentiated instruction

Urban Turnaround: From Priority to Proficiency

Urban schools face unique daily challenges. Learn how one urban school moved from the 10th percentile to the 87th percentile in four years and has continued to sustain its success by adhering to the tenets of a PLC. Participants examine the difference between “PLC lite” and a true professional learning community and discuss methods to bring meaningful change to any school.

Participants gain insights into:

- How schools move away from adult-centered behavior to student-centered learning
- The conditions necessary for a collaborative culture to exist
- The ongoing support teachers need to maintain a thriving PLC

Mike Mattos

[KEYNOTE] Challenging Educational Mythology: Proven Practices and Brutal Facts in Creating Great Schools

Becoming a professional learning community requires more than committing to the collaborative practices proven to best ensure learning. A PLC must also be willing to discontinue policies and procedures that are counterproductive to student success. Unfortunately, many schools stubbornly hold on to myths—widely held beliefs that are false—that justify teacher isolation and student failure. Mike Mattos discusses essential practices that are required to ensure high levels of learning for every student and challenges educational myths that are holding us back.

Outcomes from this session include:

- Learning the five essential practices of the PLC at Work process
- Identifying school myths and inaccurate beliefs that are counterproductive to collaboration and student learning
- Understanding how these myths lead to practices, policies, and procedures that inhibit student learning
- Beginning a “stop-doing” list for schools and districts
- Embracing a commitment and assurance that the academic success of every student is possible

The Essential Work of Teacher Teams in a Professional Learning Community

Teacher teams are the engines that drive the PLC at Work process and student learning, but only if they focus on the right work. This session uses the book you’ve been given, *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work* (Solution Tree Press, 2016), to break down exactly what highly effective teacher teams do with their precious collaboration time. Mike Mattos, one of the book’s coauthors, shares valuable tools and practical examples.

Participants in this session:

- Understand how the four critical questions of the PLC at Work framework drives teacher team collaboration.
- Experience how teams use common assessment data to improve instruction and target interventions.
- Learn how to use specific tools to assist teams with the right work.
- Assess their current reality and leave with next steps.

Guiding Principles for Principals: Tips and Tools for Leading the PLC Process

The principal has an essential role in creating a PLC. Without effective support and leadership, achieving this outcome is virtually impossible. Specifically targeted to site administrators, this session provides proven practices and examples of how to lead and support the work of collaborative teacher teams.

Participants are called on to:

- Learn how to create an effective site leadership team.
- Effectively address violations to a school’s collective commitments.
- Monitor and support the work of collaborative teams.

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Elementary Schools

Schools that function as PLCs must ultimately do two things: 1) Build a collaborative culture to promote continuous adult learning, and 2) Create structures and systems that provide students with additional time and support for learning. After examining the key ingredients of systematic intervention and enrichment, participants receive criteria to assess their own schools’ responses and an action-planning template for next steps in raising the bar and closing the gap.

Participants examine strategies and structures to collaboratively:

- Examine core beliefs.
- Utilize resources (human, material, and temporal) to meet the needs of all learners, including developing a schedule to ensure that intervention is timely, systematic, and directive.
- Utilize data to drive intervention, with a focus on progress monitoring to drive actions.
- Examine the most common RTI mistakes.
- Review a tool for assessing the progress and opportunities for the district, school, or team in considering interventions.

Raising the Bar and Closing the Gap: Whatever It Takes in Secondary Schools

Identifying which students need help is not the biggest obstacle most secondary schools face in providing interventions; it is how to schedule the time needed to provide that help during the school day. This session provides real examples from a high-performing school showing how it creates time for supplemental and intensive interventions.

Participants learn specific steps to implement a flexible secondary intervention period, including how to:

- Determine what interventions to offer each week.
- Require students to attend specific interventions.
- Monitor student attendance.
- Allocate staff.
- Extend student learning.
- Address potential obstacles.
- Do all this within teachers' contractual obligations.

Personalized Learning in a PLC at Work: Developing Student Agency Through the Four Critical Questions

Many schools and districts state in their mission the objective of creating “lifelong learners.” Because today’s average high school graduates will change *careers* at least four times by the age of 40, ensuring that all students master the skills and behaviors needed to guide their future learning is essential to ensuring their future success. A study of highly effective, learning-progressive schools across the world has found that these schools share two common elements: they operate as high-functioning professional learning communities with well-implemented RTI structures, and they promote student agency in the learning process.

Mike Mattos discusses how to build a highly effective school where students are engaged in personalized learning experiences and empowered to take ownership of the four critical questions of the PLC at Work process.

Outcomes include:

- Discussing the essential knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to “future-proof” our students
- Defining how to create collaborative teacher teams within the PLC at Work framework and foster teacher trans-disciplinary skills and behaviors

- Discovering how to use the four critical questions of a PLC to form pathways and progressions for personalized learning in the classroom
- Learning how schools utilize the RTI process to ensure every student develops student agency and personalized learning opportunities required to thrive in a global economy

Anthony Muhammad

Bringing the Four PLC Questions to Life: Systems That Ensure All Students Learn

This session focuses on systemic implementation of the four critical questions of a PLC. Participants gain a powerful understanding of what it takes to move from theory to practical, systemic implementation. The strategies Anthony Muhammad presents can be immediately applied when participants return to their schools.

Participants in this session:

- Practice developing essential standards and student outcomes.
- Learn the process for creating useful and valid common assessments.
- Discover how to methodically create an effective academic intervention system that meets each student's needs.

Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap: Liberating Mindsets to Effect Change

This session explores the connection among personal and institutional mindsets and academic achievement gaps. The issue of inequality in student learning outcomes has been studied and debated for years and commonly holds that the primary culprit in the fight to overcome the achievement gap is our individual and collective thinking.

As a result of this session, participants understand:

- The true meaning and value of school culture
- The power of mindsets and their influence on educator effectiveness
- How to shift from damaging mindsets (superiority and inferiority) to high levels of efficacy (liberation mindset)

Maria Nielsen

The 15-Day Challenge: Win Quick, Win Often!

This interactive session establishes, reboots, or re-energizes the work of collaborative teams. Schools across the country are using this simple learning–assessing process to connect the dots of a PLC. Maria Nielsen helps teams see the big picture of a PLC and put it all together in a recurring cycle of collective inquiry. The 15-day challenge is a practical way to bring the PLC process to life.

Participants in this session:

- Clarify the work of collaborative teams.
- Establish steps for a guaranteed and viable curriculum.
- Explore the learning–assessing cycle in a unit of study.

Show Me What Ya Got: Student Engagement Strategies to Keep the Pulse on Learning

Maria Nielsen helps teachers move past “sit and get” in the classroom to a place where all students actively participate in learning. She shares engagement strategies to assess student understanding throughout a lesson or unit of study.

Participants can expect to:

- Explore the *nifty nine* best teaching strategies.
- Learn how to assess student learning by implementing engagement strategies.
- Identify the differences among assessment questions, open questions, and engagement questions.

Digging Into the Data Without Getting Bugged Down

How does a collaborative team employ essential learning outcomes to create common assessments and use the data to plan next steps for students? Participants experience the process of analyzing and responding to common formative assessments to determine interventions and extensions.

Learning outcomes include:

- Examining the process of creating and using common assessments
- Efficiently analyzing data as a team
- Mapping an assessment plan and using data to plan next steps

Bob Sonju

Getting Crystal Clear on Question One: Boosting the Efficacy of Your Assessments and Interventions

Do you want to make your interventions more effective? Do you want your common assessments to be more targeted? The first critical question of a PLC asks, “What do we want our students to know?” This requires a team to become absolutely clear on each essential standard. Not until teams get to a deep level of clarity on their essential standards and their shared agreement on common formative assessment results are they able to intervene effectively. This session guides participants through the work of getting perfectly clear on what their students need to know.

Participants in this session:

- Understand the “why” behind curricular priority.
- Utilize tools to help teams gain clarity on their essential standards.
- Practice deconstructing an essential standard in teams.

Help Our Team! Working Together to Solve Common Team Challenges

What should happen when a team starts to struggle? As teachers move toward becoming interdependent teams, challenges inevitably arise. Ensuring high levels of learning for every student requires a change in thinking and practice. Participants briefly review the work of highly effective teams, consider scenarios showing common team challenges, and work collaboratively to identify strategies for moving a team forward. This session is based on a forthcoming book of the same title (Solution Tree Press, 2019) coauthored by eight educators with a wide range of backgrounds and experience in all levels of education.

Participants in this session:

- Identify common challenges that limit a team's efficacy.
- Collaboratively resolve specific challenges and share strategies to help teams progress.
- Practice specific coaching strategies designed to assist teams in their critical work.

The Big Rocks: What Effective Teams Do to Increase Student Learning

With a focus on the “big rocks” of a high-performing school, this session guides participants through the fundamentals of a PLC and highlights the results highly effective teams aim to achieve during collaborative meetings. Participants are called on to articulate specific team actions in support of an effective PLC and are provided high-leverage questions that drive the work of collaborative teams.

Kenneth C. Williams

12 Angry Men: The Power of Productive Conflict

Kenneth C. Williams uses the classic film *12 Angry Men* as a lens to discuss five qualities that characterize effective teams:

1. Open inquiry
2. Accepting responsibility for decision making
3. Participation of team members
4. Productive conflict to discover ideas and reveal new information
5. The essential role of diversity in decision making

The film explores consensus-building techniques among a group of men whose diverse personalities create intense conflict. Kenneth shows how teams face and overcome similar challenges to collaborate and succeed. The primary learning outcome is for participants to gain ideas to substantially improve team communication and effectiveness.

At Risk or Underserved? Focusing on What Really Matters in Student Learning

The questions teachers ask about educating youth impact the results. Participants in this session learn to shift traditional thinking and change paradigms by collaboratively using expertise and resources to maximize student achievement. Kenneth C. Williams helps educators capitalize on PLC principles to ensure success for all students.

Failure to Launch: Avoiding the Common Pitfalls of Collaborative Teams

The collaborative team is the engine that “drives” a PLC. There are a series of steps necessary to make that engine run. After working with hundreds of teams, Kenneth C. Williams has identified the most common pitfalls that sabotage the progress of teacher teams. Explore these areas and walk away with tips, tools, and templates proven to increase team effectiveness and student learning.