Handout 4.2

The Pragmatic PLC

Sensing and Thinking (ST)

Teacher strengths include administrative tasks, setting up systems, using data, and working with established curriculum. They take a pragmatic approach to teaching and learning.

- STs thrive in a hands-on, relevant setting in which they can easily connect adult learning activities with how those activities improve student learning.
- They want strategies and lessons that are easily customized to their content areas and student grade level. They may dismiss examples that do not deal with their specific responsibilities.
- They naturally prefer to see results rather than read about theories. Background information is almost irrelevant. Their concern? "Show me it works." ST teachers have often modified their practices over time and believe they work quite well.

Preferred PLC Activities

- *Learning through demonstrations, modeling, or film clips of real classrooms.* STs often thrive when using the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). They want to hear about a strategy, see it used with their students (or students like theirs), talk through questions and anticipated problems before they try it themselves, and finally try it and receive suggestions afterward.
- *Lesson study.* At first, ST teachers prefer studying existing lessons with clear directions. Once they see how a lesson works with students, they enjoy collaborating to improve it. Eventually, they become comfortable creating lessons from scratch.
- *Focused action research.* With their drive for "Does it work?" ST teachers find motivation in short investigations. They want to choose a goal and a strategy, try it with their students, and evaluate the results efficiently. If it works, they embed the strategy in other creative ways.
- *Examining student work.* ST teachers want this activity to concentrate on improving assignment construction and grading consistency. They thrive when PLCs develop rubrics that facilitate uniformity in evaluating student work. They also appreciate tips for streamlining tasks to better assess student learning. They may have a tendency to concentrate on right answers rather than student thinking.

Preferred Information

- *Data that tie tightly to their teaching.* STs want to know what to teach to which students. They want quick formative assessments, not test data from last year's students.
- *Implementation details.* ST teachers want clear information about their responsibilities, timelines, training, and troubleshooting contacts. They want their questions answered immediately. If this does not happen, they may hesitate and appear resistant to the initiative.
- *Summaries.* While STs can be as intellectual as anyone else, they also value efficiency. They may prefer to receive condensed articles for text-based discussions, summaries of research, charts and graphs that highlight relevant data, and so on.

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