

Figure 5.2: Chart for Rating Progress on Defining What Every Student Must Learn— Flirting, Dating, or Being Engaged?

Actions for Flirting With a PLC	Yes	No	As Evidenced By . . .
1. We think selecting essential targets feels like one more thing to do—to check off the PLC list.			
2. We don't see this step as necessary, as the district has already identified the most important targets in our curriculum. They're the ones in bold print!			
3. When we are asked to complete an activity, we aren't exactly sure how it is connected to the overall PLC process.			
4. The idea of prioritizing standards sounds good initially, but we are not sure it's worth the potential conflict that might arise from the differing opinions of our teammates.			
Actions for Dating a PLC	Yes	No	As Evidenced By . . .
1. We have essential learning targets, but we don't really monitor how our students are progressing toward mastery.			
2. We have essential learning targets, but deciding what's most important is still left to the discretion of the individual teacher.			
3. We inform students of the targets, but they don't receive support to reach them.			
4. We display the essential targets in the classroom so the principal can see them during walkthroughs.			

Actions for Dating a PLC	Yes	No	As Evidenced By . . .
5. We don't hold students who are performing years below grade level to the essential grade-level standards.			
Actions for Being Engaged to a PLC*	Yes	No	As Evidenced By . . .
1. We understand that less is more; "the main problem with curricula in North America is not that we do not have enough, but rather that we attempt to do too much" (DuFour et al., 2010, p. 86).			
2. We identify the most essential targets. Every team is engaged in a process to clarify exactly what each student is to learn in each grade level, course, and unit of instruction.			
3. We focus on mastery, not coverage. Not all standards are of equal importance. By focusing on the essential skills, teachers prepare students for 80 to 90 percent of the content that will be addressed on state and provincial tests and provide them with the reading, writing, and reasoning skills to address any question that could appear (Reeves, 2002, as cited in DuFour et al., 2010, p. 86).			
4. We expose all students to the grade-level essential standards. All students—even those currently working below grade level—must know the standard and have it as a goal. We as educators must problem solve as a team about how to best and most efficiently fill the gap between where students are and where they need to be.			

Actions for Being Engaged to a PLC*	Yes	No	As Evidenced By . . .
5. We know that the power is in the collaborative process of identifying the essential targets, not simply in generating the list.			
6. We set short-term SMART goals that are specific, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound. Educators use the mastery of identified standards as powerful, practical, and motivating short-term team SMART goals.			
7. We use, review, and rewrite. The process of deciding what is most important to teach is not over after teams identify essential standards because we must then use them and reflect on them for a period of time to ensure we selected the correct standards (Bailey & Jakicic, 2012).			

*Sources: Bailey, K., & Jakicic, C. (2012). Common formative assessment: A toolkit for Professional Learning Communities at Work. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2010). Learning by doing: A handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work (2nd ed.). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Reeves, D. B. (2002). The leader's guide to standards: A blueprint for educational equity and excellence. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.