Developing and Using Common Formative Assessments

Lorraine A. Ozar, Ph.D.

Where we’re headed...

1. Describe the role of common formative assessments in the PLC process.

2. Examine a common formative assessment planning process you can use at your school.

How do we use true collaboration to increase learning & improve teaching?

Creating Professional Learning Communities

Lorraine A. Ozar, Ph.D.
Mark Schmitt, Ed.D

One incontrovertible finding emerges from my career in and around schools: The nature of relationships among adults within a school has a greater influence on the character and quality of that school and on student accomplishment than anything else.

Roland Barth, 2006
“The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community.”

Milbrey McLaughlin (as cited in DuFour, Professional Learning Communities at Work)

**COMPARE / CONTRAST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>True Collaboration</th>
<th>Congenial Harmony</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Requires common goals achieved interdependently</td>
<td>Individuals sharing ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regular, structured meetings focused on learning results</td>
<td>Informal, anecdotal encounters focused on teacher input and student characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proactive, data-based</td>
<td>Often reactive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitment to adjust teaching</td>
<td>No accountability for changing instruction</td>
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**TRUE COLLABORATION**

True collaboration is a systematic process in which we work together interdependently to analyze and impact professional practice in order to improve our individual and collective results.
Collegiality

- High frequency of teachers talking concretely and precisely about teaching
- High frequency of teachers planning and making materials together
- High frequency of teachers observing each other
- Teachers teaching each other about the practice of teaching

Judith Warren Little

Key to improved results

Powerful, proven structures for improved results already exist. They begin when a group of teachers meet regularly as a team to identify essential and valued student learning, develop common formative assessments, analyze current levels of achievement, set achievement goals, and then share lessons and create strategies to improve upon those levels.

Mike Schmoker

The engine that drives the PLC process....

- Common Formative Assessments
- Proficiency Targets

Data

Rich

Information

Poor
Differences between Data and Information

- **Data**
  - Discrete “Factlet”
  - Not connected

- **Information**
  - Data is connected to bigger picture
  - Comparisons are present

“Data alone will not improve professional practice.

Data can become a catalyst for improvement only when we have a basis of comparison.”

DuFour

To inform and impact professional practice, ensure all teachers have:

- Timely and frequent information on the achievement of their students,
- In meeting an agreed-upon standard,
- On a valid assessment,
- In comparison to others.

Teacher Analysis

“¿De dónde es tu padre?”
- a) Soy de De Pere.
- b) 434-8743
- c) Cuba
- d) Me gusta leer.

“I think this was difficult for students because the first semester the book focuses on talking about yourself and talking to a friend. Even though I present and work with talking about others, many students do not grasp this idea. I can improve this by introducing the idea sooner in the semester and having them construct and use simple sentences about their friends and family members.”

Du Four

Common Assessments

**Summative** (at the end of learning - final exams)

**Formative** (during learning “Do again”)
Common Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is a planned process in which assessment-elicited evidence of students’ status is used by teachers to adjust their on-going instructional procedures or by students to adjust their current learning tactics.  

W. James Popham (2008)

Common formative Assessments

- Not for all learning in a course
- Track a limited number of most important learning

Important Learning

- Weaves through the entire course
- Contains “do over” skills/performances that can be applied to different topics

10th Grade Speech

Students will be able to:

- Address a group with poise and clarity
- Use technology to enhance presentation
- Adjust style and format to match the topic and the audience

CRITERIA FOR IMPORTANT LEARNING

- ENDURANCE
- LEVERAGE
- READINESS FOR NEXT LEVEL
9th Grade Science

Students will be able to:
- Identify assumptions or hypotheses
- Evaluate conclusions based on data
- Draw inferences from charts and graphs

SPANISH

Students will be able to engage in intelligible conversation in the target language, demonstrating:
- Fluency
- Correctness
- Pronunciation

United States History

Students will be able to:
- State accurate content knowledge
- Analyze cause/effect relationships
- Determine significance

PLC Common Assessment Process

1. Identify Important Learning
2. Design Common Assessment
3. Create Rubric/Establish Proficiency Target
4. Analyze Data from Common Assessments
5. Adjust Instruction

Let’s walk through some scenarios to see how this works.

Virtual PLC

- Team
- Important learning
- Goal
- Assessment Design
- Criteria/Elements to Track
- This unit instruction
- Give assessment
- Score for elements
- Analyze results
- Adjust Instruction
A score on a rubric

Per cent or number of correct responses or performances

This measure DOES NOT equate with a grade in a one-to-one match.

Item Analysis

Tedious and slow for analysis

Common Assessment - Writing

Common Assessments - Writing Second C.A.

agreed upon important learning common formative assessments

Plan Unit

Adjust Instruction

Teach it

Assess its impact

analyze data from common formative assessments
Ultimately, there are two kinds of schools: learning enriched schools and learning impoverished schools. I have yet to see a school where the learning curves...of the adults were steep upward and those of the students were not. Teachers and students go hand and hand as learners...or they don’t go at all.”

Roland Barth

What every learning team must know and do

- Determine what must be learned – Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum
- Monitor learning, provide feedback – Common Assessments
- Meet individual student needs – differentiated instruction and individual accommodation plans
- Monitor Effective Teaching Strategies

PDF of Keynote slides available at www.luc.edu/ccse