

Coherence and Clarity:

Coherence is more than *providing* the why or rationale of this work. It is *building* the why before, during and after engaging in this work. This is not a step in the process of building a strong PLC, it is the foundation for all other work to be built upon. Sustainability of improvement relies on this.

Keep it Simple! Are you suffering from ‘projectitis’ or ‘initiative fatigue’ already this school year? Every decision in your day should enhance your vision, not contradict it. Does your data show why a certain program and initiatives should be used? Are all programs and initiatives linked to the vision and goals of your school? Do they all support a focus on learning approach? Are you or your staff considering *adult* conveniences over student achievement? (see chapter 5, *Leading by Design*, for more)

Have you done a STOP DOING list?

“Time spent up front building shared knowledge results in faster, more effective and most importantly, more committed action later in the improvement process.” (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler, 2002)

Shared knowledge includes shared vision so that it becomes part of the coherence of your school. How do you know if your vision is being widely shared and accepted as part of the new culture of your campus? By asking the following four questions, you may get to the heart of staff’s beliefs and practices to evaluate how clear your vision is.

- 1) Why do we exist?
- 2) What must our school become to accomplish our purpose?
- 3) How must we behave to achieve our vision?
- 4) How will we mark our progress?

If your school cannot address these questions in the same frame of mind, then it might be time to reemphasize your vision. Remember-build on the *why* and the *how* will come.

“...for collaboration to be successful participants in the process have to create shared language for communication.” (Ehren et al., 2009)

How are you developing common language on your campus? What language have you decided to use? Stop using? How will this be communicated to the entire staff? This is a first step to building coherence and clarity. (pgs. 20-22, *Leading by Design*)

Now you must brainstorm on how to move these understandings to actions.

Here are activities to promote shared language and vision:

Activity for beginning to build common language: Use the PLC flowmap (in resource binder and attached). In small teams, discuss the processes diagramed. This will naturally bring out vocabulary that is often used in mixed contexts. Have each team compile a vocabulary list. Share out and begin to create a shared glossary of terms. (allthingsPLC.com has a complete glossary) This flow map also leads to shared understandings of PLC.

Productive Behaviors and Dispositions:

The purpose of the activity is to explore what behaviors and qualities will support effective collaboration. It is designed to create a shared understanding, not consensus.

First, develop a list of qualities and characteristics that might get in the way of a productive/effective team. Every person has a perspective, and it may be different from others. What bothers one person, may not bother another.

Next, move on to creating a vision or collective statement of what you do want. What beliefs, attitudes and actions do you want when working together? Remember to honor everyone's point of view.

Create a product from the conversation – poster, flyer, etc. reminding everyone what everyone desires in a team.

Forecast the Future:

Another option activity is to forecast and predict what your team will be like three years in the future. Create a scenario (vision of the future). Name what is happening in your team and describe how people are relating and working with each other. Each person contributes the qualities that are most important to them. Look for common qualities that everyone can agree on.

Again, create a product from the conversation – poster, flyer, etc. reminding everyone what everyone desires in a team.

Resources:

[link to You Tube video Level 5 Leadership by Jim Collins](#)

Level 5 Leadership-Good to Great-Jim Collins. (6 min)

[link to You Tube video 5 Levels of Leadership, John Maxwell](#)

5 Levels of Leadership – John C. Maxwell (27 min)

What level leader are you now? What are you doing to move up the levels? What level are you on with each stakeholder? Why will people follow you? “Who you are is who you attract.”

[Link to You Tube video Why Leaders Eat Last, Simon Sinek](#)

Why Leaders Eat Last – Simon Sinek (46 min.) Hidden dynamics that inspire leadership and trust.

[Link to You Tube video Vision Accomplished, Randy Joy Epstein](#)

Vision Accomplished –Randy Joy Epstein (7 min.)

Look past the impediments to the end vision and share it. Short and simple exercise to develop and remind staff of the common vision