Presentation NAEA Convention NYC
The Challenges of Change
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Best of PLC

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Best of PLC

Do you want more from your PLC?

This session centers on the Best of PLC—our nine-year journey to develop a collaborative platform that advocates for art and student learning.

Our goal of this presentation is to illustrate how important a well-organized PLC is to teacher development, both for new teachers and for established professionals who want to continue to learn.

*Please feel free to ask questions for clarification during the presentation.

*We will also allow time at the end of our presentation for in depth questions

*PLC- Professional Learning Community-definition

An ongoing process in which educators work collaboratively in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.

Professional learning communities operate under the assumption that the key to improved learning for students is continuous job-embedded learning for educators.

source:http://www.allthingsplc.info/about

We are a part of a larger process that helps improve learning for all. Not just the four of us.

- Something About us:

- Shelly Nelson nelsonsh@ellsworth.k12.wi.us

- Mary Lewien lewienma@ellsworth.k12.wi.us

- Adam Nirmaier nirmaiera@ellsworth.k12.wi.us

- Ashley Pritchard pritcharda@ellsworth.k12.wi.us

Our School District: Ellsworth Community Schools , Ellsworth, WI

•Our district contains a large geographical area of small close knit communities: El Paso, Beldenville, Maiden Rock, Bay City, Hager City and Ellsworth.

•We are considered a bedroom community, being only 1 hour SE of Minneapolis/St. Paul.

• Our focus is to mesh these communities together to form a united School district. There is considerable amount of disconnect in our geographical area.

•The district's goal is to develop open lines of communication and center on the district as a whole. This is a focus of our strategic planning committee involving all schools, businesses, parents and community volunteers to plan a direction for success of all students.

•Currently building a new Elementary School combining three Elementary Schools (2 very rural)

• 1720 student population- 94% Caucasian

Evolution of our PLC

- Began Fall of 2007-prior to that very little communication and isolation of art teachers
- Training for PLC-none- only few were trained in the district
- First grouping-Art Music Phy-ed or what was convenient for the day
- Wasted Time-trying to do something that did not fit into art, not all members on board- focus was on core classes (first four years)
- Best Practices- how we found our voice and success through collaboration
- Leadership- designated chair- helps with flow of resources and focus on agenda
- Advocated for ourselves-we were not improving student learning in our classrooms if it did not relate to what we were doing.
- Challenges-literacy, writing, test prep
- If it doesn't work-Fix it- through research, brainstorming, reflection and trial and error. We are constantly changing and improving.
- Learning and working together as a staff to improve student learning
- Model learning through practice

Elements of the PLC Process

A Focus on Learning

A Collaborative Culture with a Focus on Learning for All

Collective Inquiry Into Best Practice and Current Reality

Action Orientation: Learning by Doing

A Commitment to Continuous Improvement

Results Orientation

A Focus on Learning (Mary)

Our district has functioned as a PLC focusing on the commitment of learning for every student.

- Standard Based Grading- current district focus K-8
- Power Standards used for assessment .

- Commitment to improve learning through formative and summative assessment and moving all students forward in their learning.

- Developed as a PLC with K-12 sequential focus on a form of common formative assessment. Ex: Rubrics

- Best Practices: Example: When writing up the standard statement for the report card (pilot program this spring) we were advised to use another district's format that did not correlate to our curriculum. So we researched-wrote-reflected-shared-wrote-and revised to develop a k-8 sequential format for our report card.

A Collaborative Culture with a Focus on Learning for All (Shelly)

In a PLC, Collaboration represents a systematic process in which teachers work together interdependently in order to change/improve their classroom teaching/practice in ways that will lead to better results for the students, the dept. team and ultimately the school.

- K-12 sequential curriculum- BYOC- Build Your Own Curriculum
- Technology
- Standard Based Grading

Collective Inquiry Into Best Practice and Current Reality (Mary)

- We engage in collective inquiry in both best practices of teaching and learning.
  Best Practice was the starting point for our group to transform into the fundamental attitudes of working together needed for a professional learning community.

- Curious and Open to new possibilities
  We take on the challenge of the district focus on student learning and make it work for Art.

- We brainstorm, research, reflect, share knowledge and together we succeed.
  Current district focus CFA's, and DOK Depth of knowledge questioning. How we did it!

*Action Orientation: Learning by Doing (Ashley)

•Bring ideas to our PLC and come away with results, we take action!

•Ashley's experience

• New to the district adds a few more "to do's" to my list.

• Teaching itself is a learn by doing career.

• Whether new like Adam and I, or veterans like Mary and Shelly, we are ALWAYS learning!

•Learn and teach by using and sharing Best Practices.

•PLC is like a helpline, sometimes you need to phone a friend

*Action Orientation: Learning by Doing (Adam)

•Bring ideas to our PLC and come away with results,
we take action!
(Example: printmaking press)

•Taking pictures for MLP, Educator Effectiveness

•There are few students in our district that we haven't taught
(Vocational Art)

•Share our expertise! We all specialize in different areas and we
SHARE our knowledge!

A Commitment to Continuous Learning (Adam)

- Journaling
- Mary made me…
- First year teachers- it's tough! I barely survived…. Literally
- Reflection
- Stress management
- Mindfulness
- Things I am learning in the classroom
- Best practices
- The positives and negatives
- Keeping a balance between teaching, coaching and a social life

A Commitment to Continuous Learning continued (Adam)

Reflection on lesson (quality of the lesson, what is important, is it relevant)

- Did the lesson go well? If not, what can be changed?
- If my lessons are irrelevant can I really be disappointed about overall quality?
- How do I make the lesson relevant? (Ask them!)
- Why do we try to reinvent the wheel? Why do we not utilize our students' opinions more and implement that into our daily teaching or why don't we try to find ways to make our standards/essentials fit with the students' learning styles and independent guided learning.

A Commitment to Continuous Learning continued (Adam)

Improve Yourself

•I don't know everything

•Why let your ego get in the way when there is so much knowledge within your department?

The Big Picture

•A PLC needs support (first contracted year I was hospitalized with pneumonia, the next year my mom had a stroke and this year my mom passed away. These have been the hardest years of my life, but with the support of my PLC I am able to be still be successful.

•PLC=Family- You have to treat your PLC like a family, you need support, trust, communication, gratitude, and fun!

•We are constantly striving to improve ourselves, our department, our schools and our district everyday. However, we never loose sight of the big picture/what is important… THE KIDS!

- Results Orientation (Adam)

  - New Rubric

  - Simplifying/Using students' voice to prove understanding of essentials

  - I don't know everything, but I do have a grasp on things and one thing is for sure, there will always be new district initiatives, educator effectiveness requirements, strategies to improve ACT scores, and plenty of other outside factors that will complicate things.

  - At the beginning of this year I started to realize I was doing too much busy work, I was constantly updating/creating new rubrics, reinventing strategies to promote Depth of Knowledge (DOK) questioning, and demonstrate my students understood the national and state standards/essentials.

Results Orientation continued

•A new universal rubric- This rubric is based off of the new national arts, state and district standards, promotes Depth of Knowledge questioning, was congruent with my shift towards standard based grading, and uses the students' own words to prove understanding (which is incredibly useful for anyone who has to complete My Learning Plan/Educator Effectiveness).
•The Rubric is 2 sided, the 1st side- based off New National Standards
•2nd side- Consists of my District/State standards that I developed into 5-7 student friendly questions that promote Depth of Knowledge questioning and a written response.
•Students must answer with complete, grammatically correct sentences (Help out our ACT scores)! Any response with IDK or IMHO is automatically wrong!
•My students now give me direct responses that show their level of understanding!
•If anyone would like more information about this rubric feel free to talk to me or email me!

What Makes us successful:

•Communication, Communication, Communication!!!!!!

Google Docs-shared documents

PLC notes and agenda

Emails

Texts

Meeting with each other- yes, outside of regular time may be needed

No stress PLC-sharing with out an agenda

•Organization

Leadership-department chair- this is a duty-we rallied for this position

•Specialties

Each one of us brings to the group our best qualities and shares.

Allows you to create a role that focuses on your specialties and fits into your life-Don't try to do the impossible.

•Networking-volunteers

Search for people/opportunities to use as resources for learning

Grants

*Best Practices-Classroom management

We teach each other

Professionalism
-developed and supported through this process

- Presented as PLC at Wisconsin Fall Conference 2014
- Respect and support from our administration,
- Workshop and Conferences together
- Started Regional PLC
- Outreach to Universities support practicum teachers
- Community Involvement
- School foundation fundraiser
- Art Exhibits-Local, regional and state level
- Mural Projects
- Service Learning projects
- Presentation today- NYC- NAEA Convention

Summary:

One Word:

Mary-Growth

Shelly-Collaborate

Adam-Support

Ashley-Encourage

Questions:

Resources:

PLC at Work-Solution Tree Institute
Learning By Doing- A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at work
by Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker and Thomas Many
*Our Personal Journey –the history of how we developed to be productive.

source:http://www.allthingsplc.info/about