

Policy or Precedent?

Discussion Protocol

This protocol supports a text-based discussion utilizing actual district, state or other rules and regulations. Participants discover whether an academic decision has been made solely due to policies, or because past precedent has not been examined.



1 Prepare



As a group, determine which **academic structure or system** you want to discuss (e.g., course sequence, grading policy, final exams, etc.). Try to **clarify the specific issues or questions** you have about this structure/system. There may be more than one.



As a group, **assign a single issue to each participant** until all issues or questions are covered. **Bring a copy of the related policy or regulation to the next meeting.** More than one participant can be assigned the same question (and sometimes this yields different texts!).

2 Share & Discuss



Begin with a specific issue and **share the actual text of the written policy or regulation** with the group. **Give everyone time** to read & process.



When ready, the person who brought the text shares **how it does or does not relate to the academic structure, system or process in place at the school.** Take turns sharing until the group agrees on the degree of alignment.



Repeat the process for all identified issues and questions. At the end, **determine which policies have some leeway or wiggle room** that the school is not taking advantage of. Read "the lines" of the written regulation only – don't read "between the lines" -- that's how you may find some wiggle room.

3 Reflect

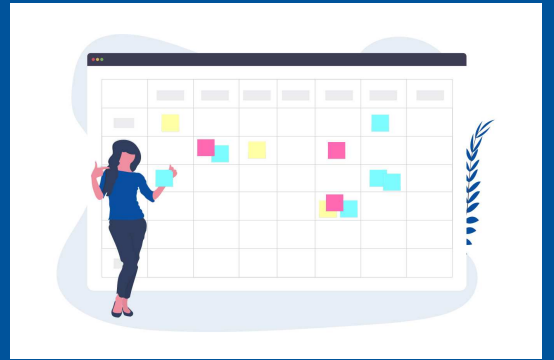


Take turns answering the following questions: Does anything surprise you? Do you have new ideas about any of the issues or questions we identified? What remains to be answered?

Never Once Again

Discussion Protocol

This protocol supports a curriculum-based discussion utilizing actual school mission statements and a one-month "snapshot" of classroom learning. Participants refer to the checks-and-balances learning triangle to discuss how school values manifest.



1 Prepare



Teachers **gather the past 4 weeks of curriculum** maps, planning calendars and student materials (e.g., texts, assignments, rubrics, etc.). They bring laptops or print resources to the meeting.



The school leader or facilitator provides **the school mission statement, district guidelines or schoolwide competencies** to all participants. The chosen document will represent "what is valued" *across subject areas*.

2 Analyze & Discuss



Teachers spend 20-30 minutes alone/with co-teachers **comparing the mission statement/guidelines provided to the past month of curriculum**. List things **explicitly valued by the school** that were **directly taught & assessed in the past month**.



Review the learning triangle on the next page. List the parts of the mission statement that went untouched in the past month (**Never**), those parts that were taught/assessed, but will not be again this year (**Once**), and those parts that were taught/assessed & will be **Again** (at least two more times, *explicitly*). Discuss anything that surprises or confuses you.

3 Reflect



Reconvene as a whole group. When we say we value something, we must teach and assess it (**build the triangle**) in order to confirm that message to students. Share findings across the subject areas. For students in the school, **what values were communicated strongly through curriculum** in the past month?

VALUE

