

By

KATHRYN

HARWELL-KEE



John Dewey said the “chief aim of teacher education should not be immediate proficiency in technique, but rather thoughtful analysis and understanding.”

Reflection is the “magic dust” for improvement.

Individuals and schools who do not have time to reflect do not have time to improve.

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a t i s s u e
D E S I G N S

COACHING

DEFINITION

COACHING PROVIDES a model of respectful collegial reflection about instructional decisions. The benefits are seen in student learning gains, increased teacher efficacy, and increased satisfaction with one's work and the collaborative culture found in the school.

WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is teachers talking and acting in a purposeful way, with the goal of continuously improving their teaching practice. A coach is a critical listener/observer, who asks questions, makes observations and offers suggestions that help a teacher grow and reflect and produce different decisions. Coaching activities provide a structure in which these interactions can take place.

IS COACHING THE SAME AS MENTORING?

Mentoring is one form of coaching, but not all coaching is mentoring. In general, mentoring is when an experienced teacher provides information to a newcomer, sharing experience and knowledge and expertise with someone who has less of these things. Coaching, on the other hand, is a continuous growth process for people of all experience levels.

WHAT MAKES SOMEONE A GOOD COACH?

How do you identify these people on your staff? Good coaches are good listeners. They don't just dictate “the right answer,” they facilitate other people's reflection. Find good coaches by looking around for the best teachers. Who listens to students? Who seeks to engender understanding in students, instead of looking for them to recite the right answers? The same behaviors make people good coaches.

METHOD

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER FOR COACHING?

There's no one best way. It varies among different schools and systems. Frequently, coaching partners find each other. It can start with a teacher who feels the need for feedback and seeks out a trusted, thoughtful colleague. In other cases, members of a teaching team could decide for themselves that they want to work in this fashion. Or perhaps a school or district will encourage coaching by providing an organizational framework that helps people find compatible colleagues with corresponding interests.

DOES COACHING REQUIRE ANY SPECIAL TRAINING?

Every coaching effort will benefit if participants are trained on effective coaching techniques and if they have time for study. Coaching is a learned skill, and even people who are “natural coaches” can improve by learning new techniques and practices. Reading professional literature on coaching can help identify techniques or programs suited to a particular school or district. (See Resources list.)

WHAT FORMS CAN COACHING TAKE?

Coaching can take place in many situations, including one-on-one conversations between colleagues, planned conferences, classroom observations, and group sessions

where coaches reflect on what they're learning and how they're growing.

It's important for schools to provide time for teachers to talk and interact, but with new demands continually being placed on teachers, it's often harder than ever to find this time. Administrators who support coaching can help by designating existing staff development time for coaching activities, for example, or providing non-teaching time for teachers by using substitutes, or releasing teachers from duties at lunch or other times.

Some of the best coaching occurs at the end of the school day, when the challenges and experiences of the day are still fresh in teachers' minds. Many teachers are tired at this point, but often they find

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that coaching, rather than requiring even more energy, is actually quite invigorating. That's because coaching is not a spectator activity. You can't sit quietly in the back of the room and grade papers or drift away. Coaching is an active discussion. Teachers are mentally stimulated, and frequently new ideas come to them and they're increasingly motivated.

Good coaching also means taking advantage of coaching opportunities that occur every day. You can have a meaningful discussion with a colleague during 10 minutes between classes, or while walking down the hall to a meeting. You can generate quality thinking and understanding by applying coaching skills to every conversation. ■

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Rationale:

What research supports this as a staff development standard?

Example:

What does a school look like when this standard is achieved?

Outcomes:

What changes can be expected if the standard is achieved?

Discussion Questions:

What issues related to implementing the standard need to be addressed?

References:

What resources extend understanding of the standard?

Suggestions for using the standards at the individual, school, system, and state level are offered. An assessment instrument to collect data regarding current practice is included.

By
RUTH MITCHELL



Parent groups thoroughly enjoy the process because it peels away the mystery of assignments and their purposes.

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a t i s s u e
D E S I G N S

EXAMINING STUDENT WORK

DEFINITION

STANDARDS IN PRACTICE (SIP) is a process to ensure that what students learn is aligned with standards. Built on the practice of examining student work, it builds an environment focusing on high standards for all students, and accelerates gains by low-income children and children of color.

SIP ensures regular, structured conversations about the assignments teachers give to students, the standards students must achieve, and student work. These conversations provide the opportunity to explore how to best use school, district, and community resources in support of standards. SIP is a quality control tool as well as a professional development process for teachers. It works with schools and classrooms; with parents and community members; and with community and education stakeholders.

SIP has three non-negotiable components:

- School-based teams to build consensus about what standards look like in practice;
- Time built into the regular schedule for ongoing team meetings; and
- Community participation so parents, community leaders, district administrators, and teachers are all on the same page when talking about standards for all students.

METHOD

Whether looking at teachers' assignments, or a unit of instruction, or a complete curriculum, SIP works the same way.

STEP 1

A team of six to eight people meets regularly at a school site – not at a conference center or the district offices, but right there in the school where they work. Members of the team are teachers, a principal or assistant principal, a counselor, and a parent. They can be selected from among teachers who teach the same students, those who teach the same subject, or in a vertical pattern at an elementary school.

They must meet regularly for at least two hours. Weekly meetings are best, but since manipulation of schedules is difficult, every two weeks is probably more realistic. Monthly or once a semester is no good: SIP works by frequent examination of student work and teacher assignments in order to keep all instruction oriented to standards.

A volunteer teacher brings to the meeting a set of student work, along with the assignment. It must be ordinary, right-off-the-desk work. In turn, everyone will bring in a

set of work. The group's leader – perhaps a coach or mentor, perhaps a team member – records the assignment, the grade level, and takes notes during the meeting.

The group members' first action is to do the assignment themselves. This is usually easy for elementary assignments, but gets difficult with high school work, especially math. As much as possible, team members should experience the task presented to students. In the case of an assignment that is seriously flawed, this step is usually all that's necessary to convince the teacher to rewrite or rethink the assignment.

STEP 2

Everyone in the team identifies the state or local standards (or national standards, if both state and local standards are lacking) that align with the assignment. This step has a secondary benefit: In many cases, teachers, parents, and counselors are less familiar with the standards and/or the assessments aligned to them than they should be. Looking through the standards to find those that match gives team members experience with the language and organization of the standards.

STEP 3

Without looking at the student work (this is important), the team now constructs a scoring guide for this assignment. The scores go from 4, which is an ideal portrait of work that would satisfy this assignment, down to 1, which describes minimal effort.

Two warnings:

- This is not supposed to be a generic rubric, but a scoring guide tailored

The essential pattern is comparing what is planned (the assignment, the curriculum) with the standards, and adjusting until there is a match.

specifically for this assignment. It must include descriptions of exactly what the teacher wants to see in successful work.

- The descriptions of work worthy of a 4 must include words denoting quality, expressions such as “convincingly persuades,” “vividly portrays,” “proves without question.” It cannot just list features alone.

STEP 4

The team now uses this scoring guide to score the student work. Team members must be careful not to refer to students, but instead confine their comments to the work. Thus, they don't make excuses because this is the best Maria can do, so let's give her a 4. If Maria's work deserves a 2, then she must be told so and given help to improve it and subsequent work.

STEP 5

In the early stages of the SIP process, depression can set in at this point. What do we do with all these 2 and 1 scores? The team looks at the options:

If the assignment is basically sound, then the concept or skill must be taught more effectively. Or perhaps the school's math or literacy program needs reshaping to focus on an especially troubling deficiency. If the assignment was muddled, poorly targeted, or didn't challenge the students, then it must be rewritten, enhanced, perhaps even abandoned and replaced.

STEP 6

The team summarizes what happened during the session and makes a plan of action. The recorder writes the results of the discussion and adds it to a binder of similar records. At the end of the school year, the team will be able to look at the records in the binder and estimate how much practice has changed.

After a few months, the team members will want to replace their classroom assignments or even their entire curriculum. Then the material brought to the meeting will change, but the process remains the same. The essential pattern is comparing what is planned (the assignment, the curriculum) with the standards, and adjusting until there is a match.

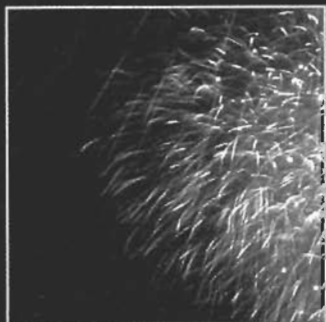
Parent groups thoroughly enjoy the process because it peels away the mystery of assignments and their purposes. A similar process has been developed so parents can look at their children's homework and see if it is aligned with standards. (Information about this process is available through Education Trust. See above.) Some parent-leaders have become trainers of trainers for other groups of parents, with considerable success directly (increasing parents' understanding of school work) and indirectly (increasing parents' confidence and ability to play their vital role in improving student achievement).

One more pointer for success with SIP: an outside agitator helps. A mentor or coach should run the team meetings, but someone from outside the school, even outside the district, as an occasional visitor to the group ensures that the process retains its edge. ■

RESOURCE

The Education Trust is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting high-quality academic achievement for students at all levels, with special emphasis on schools and colleges serving low-income and minority students. For more information contact the Education Trust at 1725 K Street NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006, (202) 293-1217, fax (202) 293-2605 e-mail: rmitchell@edtrust.org Education Trust's web site: www.edtrust.org.

By
SHIRLEY M. HORD
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Conversations with

students can be a

valuable guide.

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LISTENING *to* STUDENTS

RESearchers from the U.S. regional educational laboratories who have studied the restructuring schools have realized that a significant voice was lacking in these discussions of school restructuring: students.

Gaining students' perceptions of school restructuring, they reckoned, could provide significant information and feedback for teachers and administrators.

Student voices could help them make decisions about restructuring, and the learning that the school's professional staff would need in order to create an effective restructured school and educational programs that targeted students' needs.

DEFINITION

Working together, representatives from the labs have studied, tested and reported various worthwhile approaches to accessing students' voices (Kushman, 1997). These studies have turned up important insights into how students view their school experiences and efforts by teachers and administrators to restructure schools. Clearly, conversations with students can be a valuable guide to future restructuring efforts, including a school's professional development program.

Some findings from the labs to keep in mind while deciding how to develop conversations with students:

1. Students are very much aware how adults in the school relate to each other, and these relationships matter a great deal to students.

Students are very attuned, for example, to whether relations between staff members are collaborative and sharing or result in professional isolation.

They say the quality of these relationships influences student relations with adults and with each other. In many cases, students say these relationships mean as much as – or even more than – their formal learning activities. This is especially true at high schools.

2. Students clearly communicate individual differences in learning styles.

Some are perfectly comfortable with teachers who lecture and then expect students to reproduce lecture content. Others, however, are dissatisfied that they don't have opportunities for more active learning. These students frequently describe lecture-based classes as boring. They are hungry for opportunities to be more creative and inventive, to think

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METHOD

Here is a detailed look at one approach: structured one-on-one interviews with students.

At a K-6 elementary school, teachers selected students to represent all grade levels and to balance gender, ethnicity, and achievement. Students were interviewed one-on-one by a lab representative in a quiet, secluded setting. Art paper, crayons, colored pens, etc. were available for students to respond to some questions by creating a picture, poem, or story.

Students came to the interviews in pairs. One student would work independently/creatively while the other

“conversed” with the interviewer, who used a standard protocol with all students. This combination of interviews and creative work is especially practical when working with younger, primary grade students, whose attention spans are notoriously short.

The conversations were tape-recorded, and interviewers took notes as well, which were later transcribed into typed scripts. Working collaboratively, the lab researchers and the teachers and administrators at the school read the scripts, analyzing, interpreting, and identifying relevant information, which the researchers later provided in typed form to the teachers and administrators.

EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS WERE:

I am a good/average/poor student.

I know that I am a good/average/poor student because _____.

I think/do not think I can change the kind of student I am. I feel that way because _____.

It is important/not important to me that I do well in school because _____.

Teachers like it/do not like it when students _____.

A good/bad teacher is one who _____.

I know I have done well/not done well in class when _____.

I learn best when I _____.

Activities that do not help me learn are _____.

about their own learning and to help chart its course. Many students might benefit from different types of class structure, such as classes that rely more on cooperative learning activities and small-group work. Nevertheless, whole-group patterns are still more commonly used in U.S. schools (Vaughn, Bos, and Schumm, 1997).

3. Students' views of being successful learners differ markedly from the high standards currently espoused by school staffs, parents, communities.

Frequently, especially at lower grade levels, students define a “successful student” as someone who’s quiet in class, doesn’t bother anyone, and does what he or she is told to do. Clearly, this is the model they’ve been directed to emulate.

How different this sounds, however, from today’s calls for students to be active learners, capable of critical thought and independent problem-solving.

4. Students view school success far more narrowly than their success outside school.

In other words, students feel that what they learn in school has little application in the real world. Frequently, they see schoolwork as irrelevant and say their experiences outside school are far more valuable.

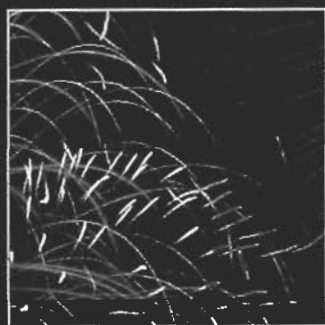
IMPLICATIONS

Educators must hear what students are saying. Students are verifying that issues such as a sense of emotional security are important if learning is to occur most effectively. Relationships with staff

members and other students in the academic setting are key to enhancing this emotional security. They want schoolwork that is connected to the issues and challenges that await them beyond the schoolyard gate. And they need to be told that being a good student means doing more than keeping your voice down and doing what you’re told.

School personnel can no longer be satisfied teaching content and not children. In order for students to learn best, staff members must first consider their own learning. Staff members must base that learning on all influences affecting students, and must listen to what students have to say. Listening to students, and acting on what they have to say, is a critical step in this process. ■

By
BRUCE L. WILSON
and
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CORBETT



Even though educators may feel they are intimately familiar with what students do each day in school, sometimes systematic observation can offer a fresh perspective.

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SHADOWING STUDENTS

DEFINITION

SHADOWING is the process of following a student and systematically recording that students' instructional experiences. The technique, while labor intensive, provides a rich display of what happens in the classroom and provides a deeper understanding of the connection between pedagogy and student performance.

KEY ISSUES

Educators contemplating the use of shadowing as a technique should address three important issues before attempting to shadow students:

- The purpose for the shadowing;
- the process to follow; and
- the intended uses to be made of the data.

Carefully considering these issues will help answer whether the technique is appropriate as well as ensure maximum benefit from the technique, both for improved professional growth of educators and enhanced student learning.

PURPOSE

Because student shadowing is labor intensive, an essential first step is tying the activity to a desired school improvement purpose. Clearly defining the purpose will make it easier to focus on the kinds of interactions/behaviors one wants to document, possible categories for analysis, and parameters for sampling.

For example, one high school where we conducted the shadowing technique instituted a pilot block schedule for a subgroup of students. The school's intent with this reform was to increase the opportunity for teachers to have meaningful instructional interactions with students, especially those who were achieving poorly.

Shadowing was undertaken to capture the quality and quantity of student/teacher interactions. Keeping the reform's purpose in mind led to a clear sampling strategy: shadowing students participating in the block schedule and comparing their experiences to those experiencing a traditional schedule. This very specific interest in the quality of student interactions was well-suited to shadowing. If, on the other hand, the school had wanted to assess student reactions to block scheduling, other techniques would have been more appropriate.

We found that despite structural changes promoted by the block schedule, students still had relatively infrequent interaction with either peers or teachers. They spent most of their time quietly working on their own, completing worksheets, or answering questions out of a textbook. Furthermore, the infrequent interactions they had with other students or the teacher didn't invite active engagement with the content.

METHOD

PROCESS

At a minimum, the shadower needs a notepad and pen to script observations. It is often helpful, in addition, to have a form for recording basic information about what is being observed.

For example, in the preceding example we began each student shadowing by drawing a layout of the classroom, with particular attention to the location of individual students. Race and gender were also recorded. To round out the background information, we also added a simple checklist to record:

- ✓ The location of the interaction (classroom, library, etc.);
- ✓ Topic of the lesson (math, science, etc.);
- ✓ Instructional grouping (whole class, small group, etc.);
- ✓ Materials being used (textbook, worksheets, experiment, computer, etc.); and
- ✓ Instructional delivery (lecture, discussion, seat work, etc.).

Most of the "data" is gathered from any interaction between the shadowed student and other students, or the student

We try to capture in detail what happened and its duration.

and the teacher. We try to capture in detail what happened and its duration. This requires systematic documentation of individual student/teacher and student/student conversations, as close to verbatim as possible.

This scripting should be descriptive of at least an entire lesson, but preferably would involve following a student for an entire day.

The question of how many students to shadow is difficult to answer. More is better, but the technique is too labor intensive to think about shadowing a representative sample of students. Consequently, we like to think of shadowing not so much as a tool to scientifically capture the full range of student experiences, but rather as a way to richly describe some of that range.

USING THE DATA

Data from shadowing are best used to stimulate conversations among teaching colleagues about student experiences. There is no magic formula for summarizing the results of shadowing experiences, since what you may be looking for will vary with the purpose.

The format for data summary is less important than whether the information can address two key questions:

- What do students see and hear as a result of their daily classroom experiences?
- What do those experiences mean for the students' learning opportunities?

It's often relatively easy to create a format and a forum where teachers can analyze results from a shadowing experience and discuss in principle what needs to change. What is much more difficult is empowering educators to act on those results to enhance students' learning experiences. In the case of shadowing the students involved in the block scheduling reform, for example, the more difficult challenge was how to change pedagogy systematically to match the structural changes. ■

What's Worth Fighting For Out There?

by Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan



If educators are going to bring about significant improvement in teaching and learning within schools, they must forge strong, open, and interactive connections with communities beyond them.

To do this, this 125+ page book urges teachers to go "wider" by developing new relationships with parents, employers, universities, technology, and the broader profession. At the same time, educators must also go "deeper" into the heart of their own practice by rediscovering the passion and moral purpose that make teaching and learning exciting and effective.

What's Out There?

- What are the Problems
- The Challenge

Going Deeper

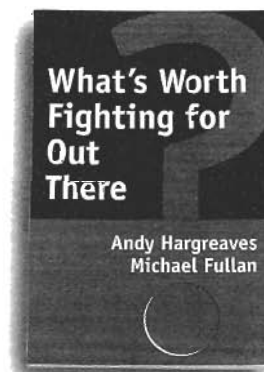
- Purpose
- Passion and Emotion
- Hope

Going Wider

- Reframing Relationships to the Outside
- Five Key External Forces

Getting Out There

- Guidelines for Action
- Guidelines for Teachers
- Guidelines for Principals
- Guidelines for Governments
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- Life-lines of Hope



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By
CARLENE U. MURPHY



Just having the faculty organized into study groups that meet weekly will not increase student achievement. It is what teachers do when the study groups meet that will impact student performance.

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a t i s s u e
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STUDY GROUPS

DEFINITION

BLENDER IS a kitchen appliance that blends different foods into one dish for the family meal. Likewise, Whole-Faculty Study Groups blend different staff development approaches into classroom experiences for students.

In schools that use Whole-Faculty Study Groups, every certified individual becomes a member of a site-based study group that meets weekly or, at the least, every other week.

When these individuals come together and focus on student learning, the range of knowledge, resources, and experience they bring to the process are blended together for a more powerful impact on all of their students.

A FACULTY DECISION MAKING MODEL

The most distinguishing characteristic of Whole-Faculty Study Groups is how the faculty determines what the groups will study. Without appropriate content, the process is empty.

Once a faculty has decided to use study groups, all faculty members will be expected to participate in a study group. Next, the faculty must decide who will lead the groups by determining how groups will be organized and what groups will do. The leader(s) may come from within the school or from outside, such as consultants. This individual or group will collect and organize data for the faculty to use in making the "how and what" decisions.

When the faculty works together during this initial stage of decision-making, teachers begin to feel part of the effort and, as a result, feel less coerced when the groups actually begin working. Every faculty member should have voice in how the groups are organized and what the groups will do.

METHOD

STEP 1: Analyze a wide range of data and indicators describing the status of student learning and the condition of the learning environment.

If the school has a school improvement plan that was developed with faculty involvement, this may have been done already. If not, this step begins the process of determining how study groups will be organized and what they will do.

Possible sources for data might include:

- Examples of student work;
- Standardized test results;
- Performance of students on the district's content standards;
- Discipline referrals and suspensions (how many and why);
- Community perceptions of the effectiveness of the school or district;
- Responses to questionnaires completed by parents, teachers, and students;
- Promotion and retention rates by grade level;

- Samples of student and teacher portfolios;
- Attendance and dropout rates;
- Reports from accrediting agencies;
- Personnel resignations and transfers (how many and why);
- Employment rates of the graduates; and
- The status of various instructional initiatives.

The last item on the list deserves special attention: The status of existing initiatives will give a strong direction to what study groups will do.

When collecting information for the faculty to review, use at least three consecutive years of data, to ensure a more accurate picture.

STEP 2: Using the data, generate a list of student needs.

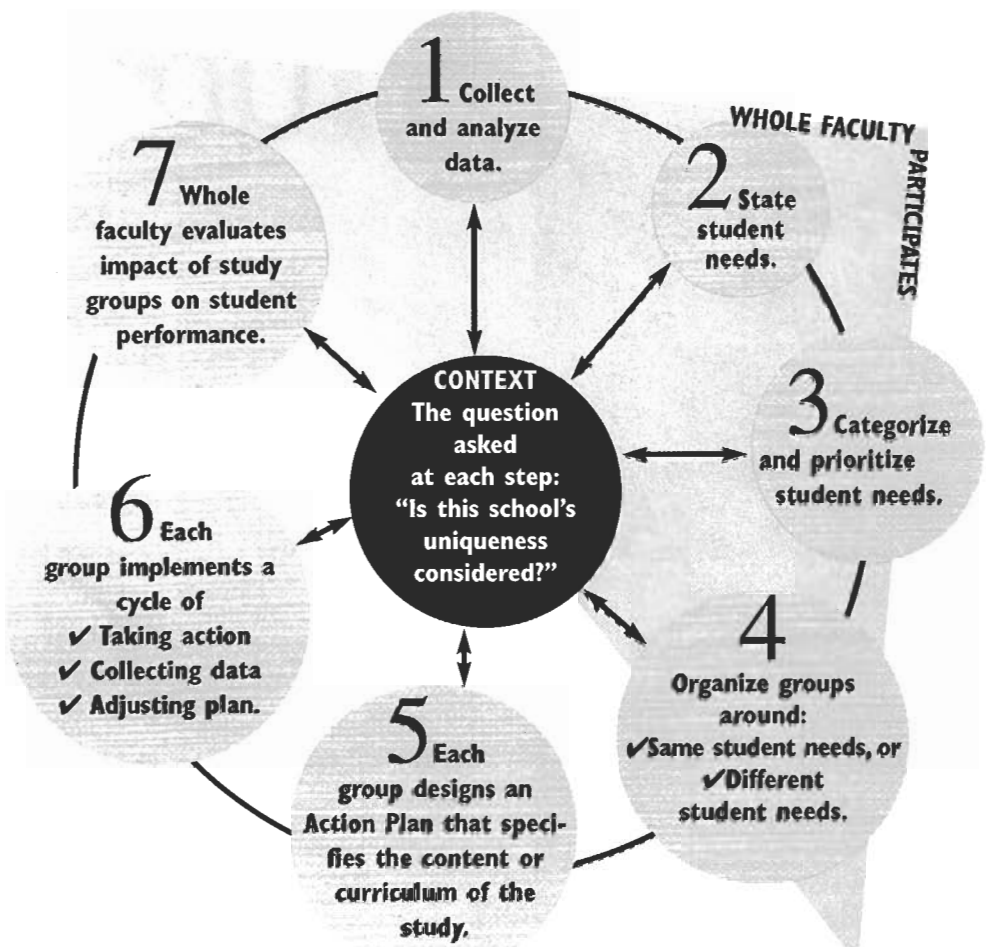
Confine this process to identifying student needs that are addressed by how teachers teach and what teachers teach, and needs that are directly aligned with professional development of the teachers. Other student needs, such as regular school attendance, are addressed through other channels, such as committees.

For example, you may decide that your students need to (numbers do not indicate priorities) :

1. Listen actively, critically, and effectively.
2. Write effectively for a variety of purposes.
3. Speak with clarity and confidence.
4. Use various types of technology.
5. Collect, organize, and review data effectively.
6. Master and accurately apply mathematical concepts.
7. Increase their reading skills.
8. Interpret and appropriately apply information from maps, charts, and graphs.
9. Employ conflict management skills.
10. Understand and appreciate different cultures.

STEP 3: Categorize student needs and prioritize the categories or clusters.

When student needs are categorized,



SOURCE: Carlene Murphy

DECISION-MAKING CYCLE

for schoolwide change through Whole-Faculty Study Groups

several may cluster around broad areas or categories, such as mathematics, language development, behavior/discipline/management of the learning environment, and technology. After the needs are categorized, give each category a name and then set priorities for the categories.

For example, using the numbered list of student needs from Step 2, categories and priorities might look like this:

Student Needs	Category	Priority
1, 9, 10	Behavior	2
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	Language development	1
4, 5, 7, 8	Social Studies	4
4, 5	Technology	3
5, 6, 8	Mathematics	5

STEP 4: Organize study groups around the prioritized student needs.

Now the faculty must decide how to organize the study groups. First, decide whether all of the study groups at a school will focus on one category of student need (in this example, language development, which was given first priority), or if the study groups should focus on different categories of student needs (such as language development, behavior, and technology). Once the faculty reaches consensus on this choice, faculty members can organize themselves into groups that examine specific aspects of the chosen need(s). Teachers should

Steps 1 – 4 usually take about 10 hours to complete. If a school begins the process at the start of a new school year, time to accomplish Steps 1 – 4 should be scheduled for a pre-planning day, or part of a day, and continued during other times when the

faculty comes together. This means study groups may not actually begin meeting until October. How long it takes to do the “front end” work will depend on where each faculty is in its understanding of schoolwide instructional needs.

always be given a choice of what they will pursue.

As groups form, limit them to no more than six members. If eight teachers want to pursue technology, for example, they should form two study groups (Murphy, 1999).

Each study group, regardless of its focus, should return to the data that identified the student need. This gives the group a starting point and the direction for establishing what the group should do to address the student need. The district’s standards in each content area will keep the group focused on the desired student behaviors.

STEP 5: Create a study group action plan.

Each study group develops its own action plan. All plans should be displayed in a public place in the school. Each action plan should be kept up-to-date, and revised if the group takes unexpected twists and turns. If a group feels at any point that its plan doesn’t cover what needs to be done, the original plan should be “trashed” and a new one developed.

The study group action plan should include the following five components:

1. The general category of student need (such as technology);
2. Specific student needs within that category (such as using software applications to facilitate learning across all curriculum areas, and using approved Web sites to supplement printed reference materials);
3. What teachers will do when the study group meets to address the student needs

RESOURCES

Murphy, C. (1995). Whole-Faculty Study Groups: Doing the seemingly undoable. *Journal of Staff Development*, 16 (3), 37-44.

Murphy, C. (1997). Finding time for faculties to study together. *Journal of Staff Development*, 18 (3), 29-32.

Murphy, C. and Lick, D. (1998). *Whole-Faculty Study Groups: A powerful way to change schools and enhance learning.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Murphy, C. (1999). Use time for faculty study. *Journal of Staff Development*, 20 (2), 20-25.

(such as determining what software is available and evaluating it, practicing using the materials and equipment, and/or looking at student work produced on computers);

4. The intended results of the study group’s work, including what evidence will indicate that student needs have or have not been met; and
5. The study group’s curriculum of study and resources it will use.

STEP 6: Implement the study group action plan.

Each study group implements its action plan. The group investigates a new strategy or set of materials. The members use the strategy or materials in their classrooms and then share the results. They

adjust the strategies and materials based on what they learn from each other. The members plan lessons together and actually teach lessons within the group to get feedback. Group members design materials together and share what has been developed in the past. They visit each other’s classrooms. They observe how students respond to the strategies and materials. They monitor the effects of the teaching strategies and materials on students by collecting information about student performance and participation.

The study group action plan is revisited every four to six weeks to see if it should be amended.

STEP 7: Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on student performance.

The results of any change should be tracked over a period of time to see what is actually happening and what adjustments are required. Three key questions are:

1. What evidence is there that a sense of community is deeper among the staff?
2. What evidence is there that teaching practices have changed?
3. What evidence is there that student achievement is improving?

The most important question to ask about whole faculty study groups is: Do they increase student achievement? The answer is not a simple “yes.” Just having the faculty organized into study groups that meet weekly will not increase student achievement. It is what teachers do when the study groups meet that will impact student performance. ■