



Pittsfield Middle High School Authentic Assessment/IBL Team Working Group Meeting

October 25, 2012

Meeting Notes (Agenda Items Highlighted in Green and Action Items Highlighted in Red)

EXPECTED OUTCOMES: By the end of the session we will have...

- Debriefed the PAR Board visit and Late Start Wednesday presentation
- Begun creation of a Common Language Glossary
- Deepened our understanding of using essential questions when planning and teaching lessons
- Practiced using a Text-Based Discussion protocol

11:00 – 11:30

Opening Activities

- a) Teacher-led activator (Brian)
- b) Review of agenda
- c) Review of norms

- The group acknowledged new team member Jenny Wellington, ELA teacher from the 11/12 team and then shared something about the AA-IBL Team that they value:
 - Arnie values this team as a way to make a real shift
 - David values the group as a way to make the theory come alive
 - Brian shared that the group has helped him to change his practice
 - Alexandra values the time it gives us to work on the things that we are really all about
 - Katie always walks away feeling like there is something that she can do that is not just theory... and that she can actually do and plan stuff
 - Bill appreciated that everyone in the group is committed to having students be more in charge of their learning. He sees the group as a good opportunity for reflection on what he is doing in class and thinks that the group works well together
 - Jenny is happy to be here even though she was drafted and didn't have a choice. Will be good to have a place to share ideas and practices.
- Arnie then shared a teacher-led activator called Green Light Yellow Light, in which "Green Light" is something that is going really well in your teaching practice and "Yellow Light" is something that you are working on or challenged by.
 - Brian's Green Light is that he has clear definitions for student centered learning, inquiry based lessons, authentic assessment. His Yellow light is that it is difficult to do it all
 - Alex's Green Light is enjoying her history course with 8th graders, which is more student-centered and less focused on coverage. Her Yellow light is her 7th grade class which is too large, has no co-teaching with over 25 students at all different levels. She is frustrated that she not reaching students in a way she wants. It would be really good to have a co-teacher.
 - Jenny's Green light for American Lit is doing a better job of connecting Colonial Literature to contemporary culture. Her Yellow light is that it's still hard for students to write their ideas succinctly on the page and to hold their attention.

- Bill's Green Light is doing a better job of making students think through things and not answering every question they have. Work may not be as quality, but it is their work. Also using student protocols as critique and that is exciting. It's a big piece of what he is trying to do. His Yellow Light is his challenging 7th grade classes, in which he is working hard to get flow going.
- Katie's Green Light is good class discussions and students taking more initiative, staying after class to talk and getting excited about it. Her Yellow Light is getting students to transfer the high quality thinking that they are doing to an assessment. They can have great ideas, but won't do a presentation or write a paragraph. Now they are actually doing the thinking at least.

11:30 – 11:45 **Team-Led Activity Debrief**

- Bill liked it because gave him a sense of what was working.
- Always good to be reflective and focus on the whole
- We share a lot of the same green and yellow lights.
- We could use it as a debrief in class.

Arnie pointed out that we have never done a data inquiry analysis in the group and **we could look at issues of attendance in trying out a "Peeling the Onion Protocol."**

11:45 –12:15 **PAR Board Debrief**

a) Use Text-Based Rendering process to conduct discussion of PAR Board report

Ideas:

- Engage in conversation – move away from structures to practices
- Recognize effort
- Encourage and support regular peer review
- Training in leadership
- Definition of intellectually challenging work

Phrases:

- Shift focus from planning to learning
- Include community members in assessment
- Encourage collaborative looking at student work
- Frequent and regular peer observations

Words:

- Rigor
- Rigorous
- Passionate
- Student work

Text based rendering:

- Many phrases linked to collaborative practice:
 - Idea of support
 - Student work... from planning to learning focus should be more rigorous

- Rigor
- Shift from focus on faculty work to considering student work
- Passionate, rigorous student work
- Student on outside to inside
- Common definition of rigor
- Notion of moving from theory to practice

Does this give us new insights into PAR Board Report?

- There are themes across the board
- We are trying to do student centered learning, but are making it teacher centered
- We are on the right path and are now moving from theory to practice
- We are moving in the right direction
- We are where we should be.
- Two years from now this will look a lot different

Can we identify the essential point in this discussion?

- Training for student leadership and protocols around that should be our next step
- We should develop a high degree of collaborative practice
- Consistency is important
- True culture change and the traditions that come from it take time
- In order for teachers going into each other's classrooms and own their own learning, we need good protocols to make it safe and effective
- You need to create and promote some school-wide definitions
- We should shift our focus to protocols that students can use
- We need to define rigor and use collaboration to improve practice and create teacher and student leaders

Debrief of text rendering process:

- Katie doesn't feel like the conversation would be much different... all the things would have come up
- Bill thinks it would have been more emotional without the process
- Jenny likes it because it allows you to collect observations and come up with thesis, it helps to boil it down to phrases and words
- This is useful for working quickly... but it can be restrictive. Certain things get overlooked in rendering process
- Alex likes it to help focus when you are reading things that could bring up a lot of emotion
- This doesn't have to be a last step...
- A visual can be helpful
- It's a great first step to understand the text
- Enables you to render a common understanding
- Text needs to be something short... can't do 100 pages
- Arnie thinks it gives structure and a sharpness of focus to the discussion

12:15 – 1:00 **IBL SMART Goal 1: Creating a Common Language/Glossary**

- Use Chalk Talk Protocol to identify what IBL words and concepts will be important to use and define when working with students, the faculty, and the larger Pittsfield community

2:15 – 3:15 **The Art of Questioning - Text-Based Discussion**

- Use Making Meaning Protocol to discuss Chapter 1 of *Make Just One Change: Teach Students to Ask Their Own Questions* by Dan Rothstein and Luz Santana

Describing the text:

- A framework for working with students to practice divergent thinking
- There is an art and a science to questioning techniques
- There is a distinction between different types of thinking
- Focus on the meta-cognitive
- Questioning is good
- Convergent thinking is necessary for making meaning
- Students who don't reflect on their learning don't learn how to learn
- This is a student centered process
- There are specific steps to follow
- It is a rigorous process that can be measured
- Divergent thinking is educated out of kids
- Prioritizing is interesting
- Lots of questions leading to the important question
- The text proposes a method for helping students to ask good questions

Questions about the text

- How long does it take from being teacher directed to kid directed?
- How do we get students past the idea of wanting to answer questions?
- How would you do this in a class of 25 students?
- How do you get kids to go beyond their comfort zone?
- What is an example of QFocus?
- What are the key components of this technique that promote higher order thinking?
- Is this a good method for arriving at an essential question?
- Could this be used in response to a reading?
- What do you do after the reflection piece?
- How could cooperative learning groups that are working independently use this process?

What is significant about this text?

- It gets kids to do things that they have not been asked to do
- There are three steps to a thinking process and this is an exercise for one of them
- Divergent thinking aligns with inquiry process
- The essential question through POL is convergent thinking
- There is a reflection as well as enduring understanding
- Kids actually become less comfortable with divergent thinking the more time they spend in school
- How does this fit into my teaching?
- Do these questions lead to a hypotheses that can be tested?
- The importance of closed-ended questions is stressed

- Convergent thinking helps students to understand and make sense of what they are doing and why its important
- Makes one question what students are capable of developmentally with regard to meta-cognition
- How do you teach kids to generate ideas when they are stuck?

Implications for our work

- Instead of giving them the questions, you have them come up to them
- QFT seems to be about expanding the divergent thinking process, but not yet what to do with it
- Jenny wishes she had this process a week ago!
- Loves the idea of a starter (image, question, quotes, lecture burst)
- Doing this as part of a cooperative learning exercise
- Using prompts (who, what, where, when, and how)
- Create an environment where kids feel safe... there are no wrong answers and this is a safe place to make a mistake
- Have each kid ask a question
- Clarifying questions is a good way of categorizing open ended and closed questions
- The group will order this book
- Josh didn't understand the point of categorizing the questions (show them the difference between deep and non-deep questions)
- Instead of asking for a reflection, we could ask students to ask four questions: how would you do that? Ask them to think about their process
- What about putting up a piece of art Bill has done and ask them to put together questions for that? Then categorize these questions and how they can apply them to their own work
- When is it good to use closed questions?
- Students can't see that open ended questions lead to more interesting discussion
- Which were the questions that produced the richest answers?
- How to think divergently is important for kids
- Are there different strategies for different age groups?

Debrief of Making Meaning Protocol:

- Alexandra liked it but got confused about #4
- Brian likes more structure in a protocol (the text rendering was more specific)
- **We can do more protocols before June, such as Save the Last Word for Me**
- Bill found the article hard to read and was nervous about doing the protocol
- Katie found that 2-4 blended together, and it was hard to make distinctions
- To Arnie it seems like the simplest of all the protocols with simple and logical steps
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- We could improve it by giving one comment in each category
- There is one called the Four A's (assumptions, agree with, argue with, apply)

2:00 – 2:15

Late Start Wednesday Review (Working Lunch)

- Paul
- Bill
- Upcoming

Paul:

- 90% of staff were extremely satisfied
- Clearly understood how the work connects to district goals
- Shared ways of implementing this in the classroom

- He left them wanting more, which is great
- The hands-off method was really powerful lesson
- He did it with his classes
- It was the first time that a teacher has led the whole thing without an outside provider
- Paul would have liked more time... 20 more minutes, but other people didn't feel that
- Was helpful to run through it beforehand

Bill:

- Will be doing a collaborative art piece and a peer review
- A Halloween team
- Will need help from others to set up
- It will be interesting to jot down the questions that come up

3:15 – 4:45

Working Time: Designing a Lesson

- Use the PMHS Project Design Template to design a lesson that incorporates a question and ends in an authentic assessment

4:45 – 5:45

Group Presentations

- a) Mini-presentations lesson plans

1. Jenny's Lesson: Ethos, Logos, and Pathos

- Start with advertisements' and provocative images
- Think/pair share and come up with a list of questions and then share it with the class:

Who hurt the little girl and why?
Is it possible to keep our children safe?
Can she ever get better?
Does she have brain damage?
Could we have prevented this from happening?

She looks abused and broken, but clean and well kept, how can this true?
What happened to this girl?
What's on her head?
What is she looking at?
Why is she looking away?
Why is she damaged?
Why does she look?

Decide what questions are open and closed and prioritize them.
How will this lead us to the next thing we are going to do?

Warm feedback: What do we like about starting with a powerful image like this:

- Not leading them
- Open with writing and tell students they have to
- The image is open ended since you block the text
- Image grabs your attention that way
- They can then go look for an evocative picture

2. Brian's Lesson: Video games and linear equations

- Read through ground rules
- Show video image of game

Agenda:

1. Question focus
2. Rules for producing questions:
 - a. Ask as many questions as you can
 - b. Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any of the questions
 - c. Write down every question exactly as stated
 - d. Change any statements into questions
3. Categorizing Open and Closed-ended questions
4. Improving the questions
5. Prioritizing the questions
6. Next steps
7. Reflection

Brain observed that we had a lot of basic questions for people who aren't familiar with video games and didn't ask a lot of quantitative questions

- Instead of open and closed, we could organize them into a quantitative and qualitative questions
- Make a connection between this simplified scenario and something in real life that grows consistently over time
- Brian is almost seeking out the closed ended questions

Warm feedback:

- High engagement right away
- Like bringing in the math and graphing
- Qualitative and quantitative distinction
- Could run it again

3. Katie's Lesson: Start to read Of Mice and Men

- Show the video without saying anything
- Then show it halfway through the book
- Take notes on what is happening and what the whole questioning thing is

4. Alexandra's Lesson: Manifest Destiny

- Come up with Do Now questions: what do you see
- Write as many questions as you can about this picture individually
- Have them do the four steps in a group and then share out
- Introduce definition of closed and open questions
- Categorize questions
- Advantages and disadvantages of both types of questions

- Change one to closed and one to open
- Prioritize (or just pick three) as a group
- Have groups go around and share their top three
- Have students reflect on what they need to do now to find the answers to their questions
- Pros and cons of this process... what went well and what didn't?
- Lead into reading on manifest destiny

Warm feedback:

- The "Do now" is what do you notice?
- Have them understand the symbolism of an allegorical painting
- Starting the unit with a visual immediately engages them
- There is a lot going on...
- Return to the image later

5. Josh's Lesson: What's Inside a Glow Stick?

- What is inside the glow sticks?
- What are the chemicals inside?
- Will the cold one last longer?
- How does this apply to a real world situation?
- What are examples of other ways that temperature affect molecules
- Is there a way to measure how much each one lights up
- What is the temperature differential in the glow sticks

Context is that they are starting to go through the scientific process of inquiry

- Now that they know how temperature effects molecules, gage how fast grow capsules grow based on temperature
- What about doing it with the sound off?

Warm feedback

- Its short, simple
- Its engaging... but maybe even more so without him (the video narrator) talking

6. Bill's Lesson: How can artists begin to develop metacognitive questions about their own artwork to move them forward?

- This is part of a reflection process he usually does with four boring questions:
 - How can you make it better?
 - What was the biggest challenge?

Warm feedback:

- How about displaying one piece of your artwork at different stages of development
- Run the QFT on an image of all four stages and let them come up with questions

- Or show Pollock in front of a painting or in process
- Could do it in groups with one person

Let's all try piloting these activities in our classrooms over the next month. Take notes and come ready to talk about the process next time:

Debrief of process of designing a lesson that incorporates a questions and an authentic assessment:

Feedback on the activity:

- It was extremely useful... its good to sit in a meeting for 7 hours and go into class the next day feeling comfortable about doing something new
- You can tailor it to your style
- The use of images was powerful
- Bill liked that we had to brainstorm right after doing it
- Working outside of our subject area forced us to take into account other perspectives and approaches
- The cohesiveness of all implementing this in their classrooms
- Jenny has been trying to do this for years... teaching 7th grade before didn't know how to talk about open and closed
- Arnie appreciated the collaborative nature of the process
- Goes back to par board on collaborative work and actual practices

5:45 – 6:00

Closing Activities

- a) Journaling
- b) Norms Review
- c) Driving and Restraining Forces (Force Fields)

Driving and Restraining Forces:

What are the driving forces in this room today that let us do what we did today and the restraining forces that made our work more challenging?

Driving Forces

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Food ○ Commitment to work ○ Critiques in a positive way – positive attitude ○ Introductions with Jenny... take notice of the community changing ○ People liked the green/yellow ○ The make one change article ○ Rich conversation ○ All taking practical things back to our class ○ Having Jenny in the group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having Cam in the group ○ Using comparative protocols ○ We need a variety ○ Agenda that we follow that has times ○ Very clear but flexible ○ Breaks built in ○ Reading protocols dovetailed with work that Kevin Perks does with them ○ Mapping the text ○ Google school reform initiative and get all the protocols |
|---|--|

- The time was a driving force... didn't miss as much time
- Chalk talk helped to generate a whole lot of thinking
- At some point in time need to prioritize
- Puts on paper all the conflicts in our head
- Put on paper some big forces that we put on paper that we can work with next time
- More coordinated having David and Arnie together
- Simplifies the cogs
- Did transparent facilitation
- The image of the cogs
- Worked on a lot of things we can use directly in the classroom
- What about having group members do some facilitation
- Josh always has back-ups

- Leave some time in the next meeting to make a schedule of what we will be doing and build in times for
- Leading protocols is a great thing for folks to work on
- Lots of energy that lasted for 7 hours
- David taking notes

Restraining Forces

- Schedule for Jenny (she missed all her classes)
- Can't have kids during the day
- Brian brought student work and we didn't have time
- People in and out of meetings
- Paul not here
- Don't have everybody's good energy, set us back
- Chalk talk was took big a task and left unresolved
- Didn't do a physical activator

For Next or Future Meetings:

- Build something into the schedule to look at student work / Do a looking at student work protocol
- Create a diagram for learning process and language... something that could go in every classroom
- Order the book: Make Just One Change