Facilitating Data-Driven Conversations

Contents

Purpose

The Network for College Success believes multiple forms of data can be powerful tools for school improvement when they are used to trace causes, seek solutions, and guide change. Data-driven conversations require careful facilitation to ensure a safe and supportive environment wherein educators take ownership of their outcomes. It is important for Success Team members to be open to honest reflection about successes and struggles.

How & When to Use

All Success Team conversations should be rooted in data, so Team Leads must select protocols that support the effective facilitation of these conversations. The protocols in Tool Set C are frequently used in Network for College Success partner schools. Your team should establish a regular routine for using protocols as part of your data conversations to improve student outcomes.

Using protocols might feel forced at first try, but trust the process. The protocol is structured to create a safe environment for all.

The Freshman Success Framework is the foundation for effective school practice on On-Track and student success. The Network for College Success has seen the greatest and most sustainable gains for freshmen when schools develop high-functioning educator professional learning communities, which we call Success Teams.

This Tool Set focuses on the below actions of a Success Team stemming from the Freshman Success Framework.

Elements	Success Team
Setting Conditions	• Engages in regular, calendared Success Team meetings to 1) analyze data and 2) develop, monitor, and adjust interventions
Implementation	• Reviews incoming class performance data to develop early and targeted supports for students • Develops, implements, tracks, and evaluates Tier 2 interventions, making adjustments when appropriate • Reviews actionable student-level data in order to provide appropriate support

This Tool Set also highlights the actions stemming from the Framework for the Principal and Team Lead in support of the Success Team work.

Team Lead

• Setting Conditions: With principal and data technician, establishes Success Team meeting calendar that includes regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment

• Implementation: Establishes team meeting conditions conducive to the successful execution of Success Team duties

• Implementation: Works with data technician to bring actionable student-level data at regular intervals

Principal

• Setting Conditions: Provides and protects team meeting calendar, with regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment

• Implementation: Provides timely access to freshman success-related data, such as point-in-time On-Track data

• Implementation: Reviews and interrogates interim freshman success-related data in light of Success Team goals, and strategizes with team leadership around next steps

ATLAS-Looking at Data Protocol

A protocol to guide conversation when data is the focal point. The structured approach of a protocol, with clear norms and expectations for conversation, creates a safe space for all participants. This protocol supports equity of voice and allows all members to describe the data, make inferences, and share implications for future work.

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ATLAS
Looking at Data

Learning from Data is a tool to guide groups of teachers discovering what students, educators, and the public understand and how they are thinking. The tool, developed by Eric Buchovecky, is based in part on the work of the Leadership for Urban Mathematics Project and the Assessment Communities of Teachers Project. The tool also draws on the work of Steve Seidel and Evangeline Harris-Stefanakis of Project Zero at Harvard University. Revised November 2000 by Gene Thompson-Grove. Revised August 2004 for Looking at Data by Dianne Leahy.

1. **Getting Started**
   - The facilitator reminds the group of the norms.
   - The educator providing the data set gives a very brief statement of the data and avoids explaining what she/he concludes about the data if the data belongs to the group rather than the presenter.
   Note: Each of the next 4 steps should be about 10 minutes in length. It is sometimes helpful for the facilitator to take notes.

2. **Describing the Data** (10 minutes)
   - The facilitator asks: "What do you see?"
   - During this period the group gathers as much information as possible from the data.
   - Group members describe what they see in data, avoiding judgments about quality or interpretations. It is helpful to identify where the observation is being made — e.g., "On page one in the second column, third row..."
   - If judgments or interpretations do arise, the facilitator should ask the person to describe the evidence on which they are based.
   - It may be useful to list the group's observations on chart paper. If interpretations come up, they can be listed in another column for later discussion during Step 3.

3. **Interpreting the Data** (10 minutes)
   - The facilitator asks: "What does the data suggest?"Followed by — "What are the assumptions we make about students and their learning?"
   - During this period, the group tries to make sense of what the data says and why. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the kind and quality of evidence.
   - From the evidence gathered in the preceding section, try to infer: what is being worked on and why?
   - Think broadly and creatively. Assume that the data, no matter how confusing, makes sense to some people; your job is to see what they may see.
   - As you listen to each other's interpretations, ask questions that help you better understand each other's perspectives.

4. **Implications for Classroom Practice** (10 minutes)
   - The facilitator asks: "What are the implications of this work for teaching and assessment?" This question may be modified, depending on the data.
   - Based on the group's observations and interpretations, discuss any implications this work might have for teaching and assessment in the classroom. In particular, consider the following questions:
     — What steps could be taken next?
     — What strategies might be most effective?
     — What else would you like to see happen? What kinds of assignments or assessments could provide this information?
     — What does this conversation make you think about in terms of your own practice? About teaching and learning in general?
     — What are the implications for equity?

5. **Reflecting on the ATLAS-Looking at Data** (10 minutes)

Presenter Reflection:
   - What did you learn from listening to your colleagues that was interesting or surprising?
   - What new perspectives did your colleagues provide?
   - How can you make use of your colleagues' perspectives?

Group Reflection:
   - What questions about teaching and assessment did looking at the data raise for you?
   - Did questions of equity arise?
   - How can you pursue these questions further?
   - Are there things you would like to try in your classroom as a result of looking at this data?

6. **Debrief the Process** (5 minutes)
   - How well did the process work?
   - What about the process helped you to see and learn interesting or surprising things?
   - What could be improved?

ATLAS - Looking At Data Protocol

Instructions

This is an example of the questions that would stem from each of the ATLAS Protocol steps. It can also serve as a template for note-taking. For each of the four phases of the ATLAS protocol, jot down additional questions that can be raised to elicit deeper analysis and reflection from participants.

FACTS *(What do we see?)*	INTERPRETATIONS & WONDERINGS *(What does the data suggest?)*	IMPLICATIONS *(What does this mean for our work?)*	NEXT STEPS *(So what are we going to do?)*
What do we see in terms of: • Performance in core courses vs electives? • Historical performance over time in courses? (if provided in graph) • Entire grade level vs special populations? (if student lists are provided) • Boys' performance? Girls' performance? • The proportion of students with B's or better vs those with D's and F's? • Proximity to our annual/quarterly On-Track benchmark? (if point-in-time On-Track percentage is shared) • Change in performance of students targeted for intervention? • Number of off-track students who have averages within the 40 – 59% range?	What does the data suggest about: • Academic rigor of the courses? • Student attendance patterns? • The effectiveness of our Tier 2 intervention on targeted students? • Execution of the modifications and accommodations in student IEPs? • Execution of learning plans for our ELLs? • Our tenacity in regularly updating grades? Are these grades a true reflection of where students are academically? • The quantity and types of opportunities given for students to succeed?	What does this mean for our work in terms of: • Students who are nearly off track? • Students who are off track? • Students who are failing more than 3 classes? • Our needs as teachers to successfully meet the directives in student IEPs and/or ELL learning plans? • Improving student access to the concepts and skills in our courses? • Adjusting our Tier 2 intervention? • Ensuring grades are as current as possible so that our actions are addressing real-time need?	From all the implications, what would be the high leverage next steps we can take toward improvement? (Limit the next steps to no more than 3, especially if the whole team is owning them)

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Adapted from the School Reform Initiative ATLAS Protocol.

Wagon Wheel Tool for Data Analysis

A tool that allows for the triangulation and assessment of multiple variables and data points.

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Wagon Wheel Tool for Data Analysis

Steps in using the wagon wheel:

- Assign key variables to each spoke on the wheel.

- Establish a scale for each spoke, with the highest performance on the inner rim of the circle. Label individual spokes with their own scale.

- Plot performance data along spokes, color coding to distinguish units being compared (classrooms, schools, departments, grade levels, budgets, or even certification areas).

- Connect the lines for each unit if comparisons are made between units.

- Identify the pattern of performance against selected performance standards.

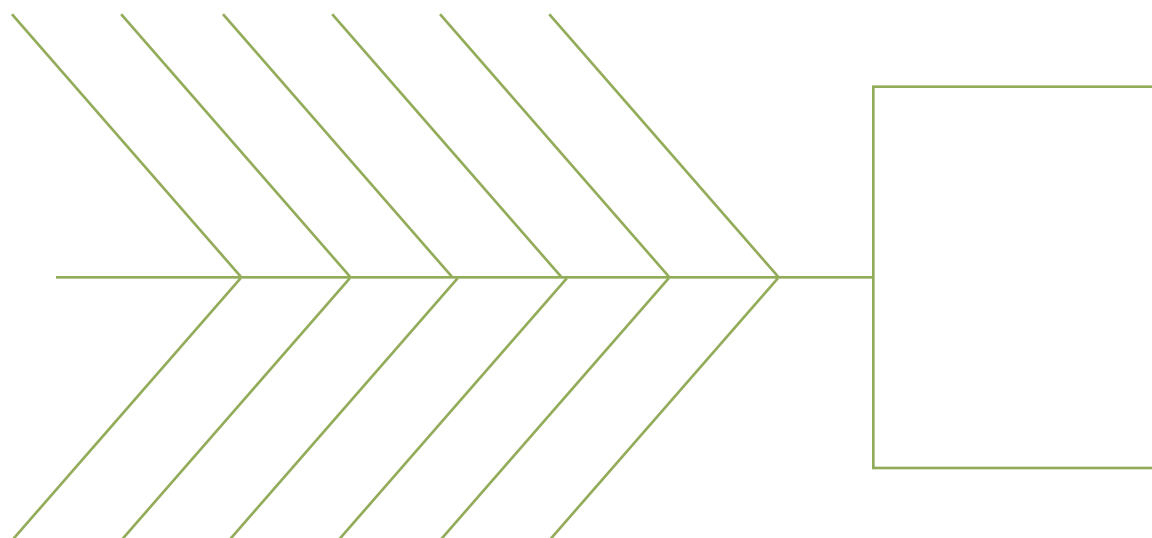| Variables:		
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Adapted from Beyond the Numbers: Making Data Work for Teachers & School Leaders (White, 2011)
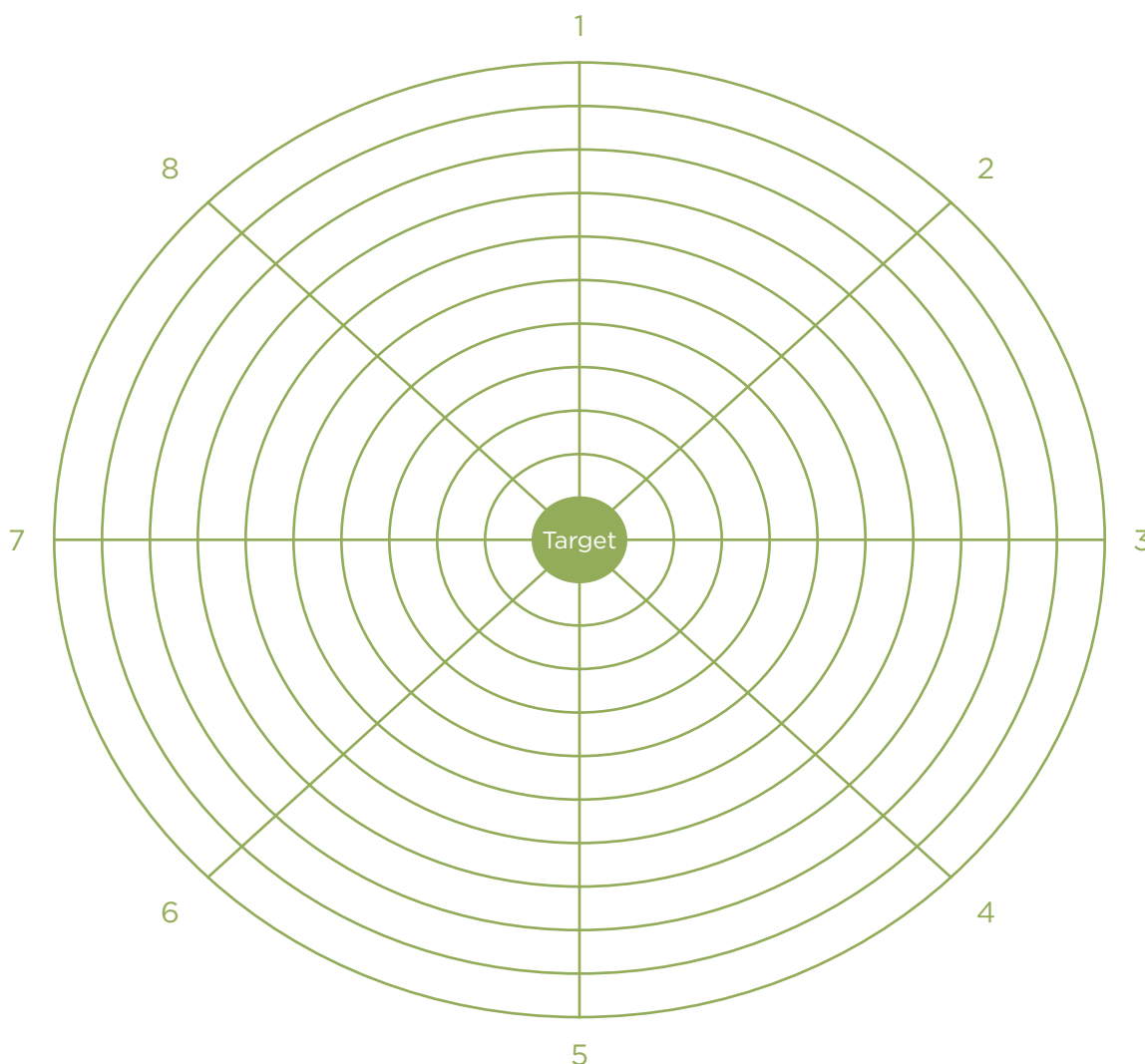
Wagon Wheel Tool for Data Analysis
Analyze to Prioritize

Performance	Inference
Strengths/Celebrations	
Obstacles	
Prioritizing List your most urgent needs and/or largest obstacles: 1. 2. 3.	

List Your Obstacles:

Using the template below, list your largest obstacle in the rectangle. Brainstorm all possible causes and list on the lines. Review your causes and circle only the ones which you can impact.

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Adapted from Beyond the Numbers: Making Data Work for Teachers & School Leaders (White, 2011)

Success Team in Action: North-Grand High School Video

A video that provides a snapshot of a Success Team holding an accountable conversation using a structured protocol.

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