



Building Community

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Purpose

Success Teams are learning communities organized around the shared purpose of supporting students to successfully transition to high school. As individuals, team members may have differing philosophies and ideas on how to approach this work. Regular community building provides opportunities for team members to connect to a shared purpose as well as each other.

Tool Set A provides Team Leads with ideas for community building within Success Teams.

How & When to Use

Community building is a part of Success Team work and related activities should connect to the goals for the meeting. When creating a team meeting agenda, Team Leads should preserve space and time for these activities. You may be tempted to eliminate community building when short on time or when you feel there are other important things to do. Resist the urge and make sure community building is a regular segment of your team's meeting.

The protocols and activities in Tool Set A set the stage for this work. For instance, Compass Points is ideal for a new Success Team. The information learned from this activity can help the Success Team determine the strengths and areas for growth of each team member. Once completed, it is not uncommon to hear members reference the findings. You might hear a team member say, "Well, I'm an East, I need to know the big picture," or "I know she's a South, so she's concerned with our comfort right now."




Connections to Framework

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.

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Elements	Success Team
<p>Setting Conditions</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops effective meeting strategies, such as establishing a mission statement and clear purpose, and building norms and action-oriented agendas • With principal and Team Lead, establishes foundational knowledge, sets purpose, and creates freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection

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: Acquires foundational knowledge on the importance of freshman course performance as well as tools and strategies to lead the Success Team
- Implementation: Establishes team meeting conditions conducive to the successful execution of Success Team duties

Principal

- Setting Conditions: Selects, programs, sets purpose, and provides foundational knowledge on freshman success work for core set of grade-level teachers



Building Community

Forming Ground Rules

A protocol to support Success Teams to develop norms that will shape how they work together. Ground rules help teams establish trust and clarify expectations.



Forming Ground Rules (Creating Norms)

Developed by Marylyn Wentworth.

Gaining agreement around Ground Rules, or Norms, are important for a group that intends to work together on difficult issues, or who will be working together over time. They may be added to, or condensed, as the group progresses. Starting with basic Ground Rules builds trust, clarifies group expectations of one another, and establishes points of “reflection” to see how the group is doing regarding process.

Time

Approximately 30 minutes

Process

1. Ask everyone to **write down what each person needs in order to work productively in a group**, giving an example of one thing the facilitator needs, i.e. “to have all voices heard,” or “to start and end our meetings when we say we will.” (This is to help people focus on process rather than product.)
2. **Each participant names one thing from her/his written list**, going around in a circle, with no repeats, and as many circuits as necessary to have all the ground rules listed.
3. **Ask for any clarifications** needed. One person may not understand what another person has listed, or may interpret the language differently.
4. **If the list is VERY long — more than 10 Ground Rules — ask the group if some of them can be combined to make the list more manageable.** Sometimes the subtle differences are important to people, so it is more important that everyone feel their needs have been honored than it is to have a short list.
5. **Ask if everyone can abide by the listed Ground Rules.** If anyone dislikes or doesn’t want to comply with one of them, that Ground Rule should be discussed and a decision should be made to keep it on the list with a notation of objection, to remove it, or to try it for a specified amount of time and check it again.
6. **Ask if any one of the Ground Rules might be hard for the group to follow.** If there is one or more, those Ground Rules should be highlighted and given attention. With time it will become clear if it should be dropped, or needs significant work. Sometimes what might appear to be a difficult rule turns out not to be hard at all. “Everyone has a turn to speak,” is sometimes debated for example, with the argument that not everyone likes to talk every time an issue is raised, and others think aloud and only process well if they have the space to do that. Frequently, a system of checking in with everyone, without requiring everyone to speak, becomes a more effective Ground Rule.
7. **While work is in progress, refer to the Ground Rules whenever they would help group process.** If one person is dominating, for example, it is easier to refer to a Ground Rule that says, “take care with how often and how long you speak,” than to ask someone directly to stop dominating the group.
8. **Check in on the Ground Rules when reflection is done on the group work.** Note any that were not followed particularly well for attention in the next work session. Being sure they are followed, refining them, and adding or subtracting Ground Rules is important, as it makes for smoother work and more trust within the group.



Building Community

Compass Points

This protocol allows team members to consider their own working styles as well as the working styles of others.



Compass Points: North, South, East, and West

An Exercise in Understanding Preferences in Group Work

Developed in the field by educators.

Purpose

Similar to the Myers-Briggs Personality Inventory, this exercise uses a set of preferences which relate not to individual but to group behaviors, helping us to understand how preferences affect our group work.

Note: See the third page, Compass Points Explanations Expanded, for additional descriptions of the 4 preferences.

Process

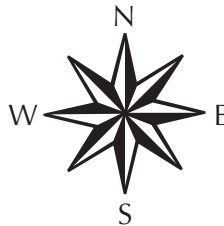
1. The room is set up with 4 signs on each wall — North, South, East, and West.
2. Participants are invited to go to the direction of their choice. No one is only one direction, but everyone can choose one as their predominant one.
3. Each direction group answers the 5 questions (see next page) on a sheet of newspaper. When complete, they report back to the whole group.
4. Processing can include:
 - Note the distribution among the directions: what might it mean?
 - What is the best combination for a group to have? Does it matter?
 - How can you avoid being driven crazy by another direction?
 - How might you use this exercise with others? Students?

North

*Acting — “Let’s do it”;
likes to act, try things, plunge in*

West

Paying attention to detail — likes to know the who, what, when, where and why before acting



East

Speculating — likes to look at the big picture and the possibilities before acting

South

Caring — likes to know that everyone’s feelings have been taken into consideration and that their voices have been heard before acting



Compass Points Explanation Expanded

Developed by Sue Horan, June, 2007.

North

- You take charge.
- You run the daily operation.
- You have lists of things to do and you need to get started and get them done.
- You get assignments in early.
- You don't have to ask questions to begin your work or assignment.
- You drive the work and get it done.
- You teach our children a complete curriculum.
- You will stitch the mosaic together and do the work.

East

- You have the big picture, the frame that needs to be filled in.
- You need to see the final product and will work with the end in mind.
- You believe in working backwards, understanding by design.
- You don't get a project started until you are clear about the final product.
- You teach our children the big concepts.
- You know what the mosaic looks like in the end.

West

- You ask the hard questions.
- You live by inquiry.
- You challenge us to identify the details.
- You don't start a project until you are clear about the details.
- You make our picture more complete.
- You lead by inquiry and engage in thoughtful discourse.
- You make us think and teach detailed concepts to our children.
- You fill in the details of the mosaic.

South

- You take in the information, slow us down, and make sure everyone has voice and is heard.
- You include everyone, and make sure the human side is nurtured.
- You take care of us and bring up our affective domain.
- You make sure the emotional side of our work is heard.
- You make sure we are all included.
- You teach our children with strong relationships and care.
- You add beauty to the mosaic, make sure everyone participates in the creation, and keep us all comfortable.



Building Community

Community Call: Icebreakers and Warm-Ups

Community Calls are brief activities that take place at the beginning of the meeting. They enable team members to share what makes them stay committed to each other and the work.



Ice Breakers and Warm-Ups

Shared at the June 2000 National Facilitators Meeting

The following exercises designed to help people get to know one another.

1. If you were to write your **Autobiography**, what would the title be and why.
2. Write on the inside of your tent card (table name card) **a fact about yourself** that no one would be likely to guess. Read them out loud. Gives people a hook. (i.e., "Faith, who raises sheep.")
3. **Draw a picture that describes who you are** -- can be symbols, colors, you doing something...
4. **Create a flower**. Each person puts one petal on the flower, on which is written something important about them. If we can find something we all have in common we put it in the center.
5. **Human Scavenger Hunt**, where you find things interesting about each person from a list that might be work related or not. Items like, find someone who has facilitated a protocol, someone who has taught in another country, someone who has created a portfolio that works... People share who they found in the whole group.
6. People at each table find **four things they have in common and share with the large group as an introduction**. Can't be anything about education. (At one table, all had an Uncle Harry they didn't like).
7. People post one **clue about themselves** (with no name) on a bulletin board. Later in the day, add another clue beside the first clue (more if there is time) and people guess identities from the clues at the end of the day. People make assumptions and then they find that it's very revealing and fun.
8. **Post cards from the edge**. Bring a collection of wild postcards and hand them out. Each person finds something in the post card that relates to their experience as a teacher or principal and shares that with the group.
9. **Give out pennies and look at the dates**. Go around the room and share something that occurred for you in the year of the penny. It can be something about your education (as a child, a teachers etc.) or it can be just about life. You'll need a good collection of pennies with varied dates.
10. **Skittles**. People grab one, there is a guide by color: Yellow, something you're doing this summer; green, something about work; red, an adventure you've had in education, etc. Whatever you want for categories.

11. **North, South, East, West.** It establishes strengths: North: do it now (action); West: organizational (structure); East: vision (meaning); South: feelings (caring). See directions in SRI Resource and Protocol Book and SRI website.
12. **Gingerbread people.** Hand out Gingerbread people, who have a question on each of their body parts: what gives you indigestion (stomach), what drives you crazy (head), what you love (heart), what you bring (one leg), what you want to let go of, (hand) what you want to take away. Each person takes a turn introducing themselves and answering the questions. They can write them in and post them all, with their names on the Gingerbread people.
13. **Draw your school** - either a picture or a floor plan, show challenges, strengths - personalize school by what you think makes it special. Share pictures.
14. Write down **powerful learning experiences** from when you were age 10 to 13. Share them.
15. **Line up in birth order and share schooling** in small groups that break up roughly by generations or clusters of years and share out.
16. **Movie titles that describe your school experience** and why.
17. **Change style indicator** and score yourself, validate Conservators, Validators, and Initiators of Change, Pragmatist. (You'll need the directions to do this)
18. Read *Alexander's Horrible Rotten Day* (children's book) aloud, then ask people to share their **Bad morning experiences**.
19. **Two truths and a lie:** you share two things that are true and one lie about yourself (as an educator or a person - decide on one) and the group tries to guess which one is the lie. "What you would like to be true?" is the follow up question.