Sample Protocols

This resource offers protocol options for a district and/or building to use with their collaborative structures. Each protocol is for a different purpose as described in the OIP Guide.

Protocols create a structure to ask challenging questions and allow for active listening. They make the work transparent. It is important to remember that the point is not to do the protocol well, but to have an in-depth, insightful conversation about teaching and learning.

a) Protocol for Looking at Data and Teacher Work – Adult Implementation of Focused Plan Strategies

b) Protocol for Looking at Effects on Student Progress – Collaborative Assessment Conference

c) Protocol for Exploring Student Work – Analysis of Student Work

d) Tuning Protocol

e) Protocol for Developing "Look Fors"

f) Protocol for Analyzing Success

For other protocols and information about protocols, contact:

- Colorado Critical Friends Group: www.coloradocfg.org
- National School Reform Faculty, www.nsrfharmony.org
- Coalition of Essential Schools, www.essentialschools.org
- Looking at Student Work, www.lasw.org
- Bay Area Coalition for Equitable Schools, www.bayces.org

Protocol for Looking at Data and Teacher Work – Adult Implementation of Focused Plan Strategies

This protocol is a tool to guide groups of teachers to bok at what data reveals about teacher practices and student response. Time: 50 –60 minutes. There are six steps to this process.

1. Getting started (10 minutes)
    a. Presenter briefly explains the data that the group will be examining but does not explain what was hoped for or expected to be seen. Presenter avoids any statements about whether or not the work or data is good or poor. Then the presenter moves out of the group to listen and observe.
    b. Data is broadly defined but needs to focus on what the teacher did as a way of implementing the focused plan strategy(ies).
    c. Examples include student work, test scores, attendance charts, parent teacher conference logs, student survey results, video tapes, lesson plans, etc.
2. Describing the work (10 minutes)
    a. Facilitator asks, "What do you see?"
    b. Group describes what they see in the data, avoiding judgments about quality or interpretations.
    c. If judgments do arise, the facilitator asks the person to describe, not interpret.
    d. Option: record observations on chart paper.
3. Interpreting the work (10 minutes)
    a. The facilitator asks for interpretation of the data. For instance, what do we make of this work? How are you making sense of this data? What patterns do you see? What accounts for those patterns?
    b. During this period, the group tries to make sense of what the data tells them. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the evidence.
    c. From the evidence gathered, the group infers what is happening. For instance, they might discuss what students seem to be doing in response to the teacher and what the teacher does/does not understand about implementation of the practice. *Think broadly and creatively.*
    d. As the group listens to each other's interpretations, they ask questions to beter help understand each other's perspectives.
4. Implications for classroom practice (10 minutes)
    a. The facilitator asks, "What are the implications of this work for teaching and assessment? For professional development? For the allocation of resources?"
5. Group discusses the classroom implications, including:
    a. What steps could the teacher/school/district take next?
    b. What would make the teaching strategy(ies) more effective?
    c. What other information would they like to see in the student work/response?
    d. What kind of assignments or assessments could provide this information?
    e. What do we learn about equity within our classroom/building/district?
    f. What does this conversation make you think of in terms of the group members' own practice? About teaching and learning in general or as it relates to the strategy?
6. Debrief

Protocol for Looking at Effects on Student Progress - Collaborative Assessment Conference

This protocol has several purposes which include: a) Enhance teachers' perceptions of student work by sharpening the teachers' observation skills; b) Encourage a balance in perception, looking for strengths and needs; and c) Encourage conversation among teachers about what the work shows and how they can act individually and collectively on what it shows in order to benefitstudents. Time for this protocol ranges from 45 to 90 minutes and can involve up to 30 teachers; however, each must have access to the student work (hard copy or visual display) under study. The steps of this protocol are:

1) Presenting – The group facilitator begins by reviewing the protocol and asking the presenting teacher what he or she has brought to the group. The teacher then presents the student work (may be one assignment or work from different assignments, from one or several students) offering only minimal context. The student work could be videotapes, art, essays, test, projects, etc. Participants read silently or otherwise examine the work, marking on their copies any sections that hold particular significance for them.
2) Describing – The group facilitator asks the group, *"What do you see? What evidence do you see of his/her thinking, learning and /or understanding?"* Group members respond by describing components or aspects of the work without making judgments of quality.
3) Raising Questions – The facilitator asks, *"What questions does this work raise for you? What skills is the student working on? How did the student try to fulfill the assignment? What questions did the student seem to be answering?"* Participants respond with questions they have about the student, the work, the assignment, the classroom, etc. During this time the presenting teacher listens and makes notes, but does not respond.
4) Speculating – The group facilitator asks, *"What do you think this student is working on?"* Respondents say what they think the student was attempting to learn, accomplish, practice or improve. The group facilitator presses for evidence to support these speculations.
5) Responding – The group facilitator invites the presenting teacher to speak: *"After hearing all this, what are your thoughts?"* This is the presenter's chance to respond to questions raised, to offer additional context, to share his or her own thoughts about the student's work and to respond to any other questions participants mayhave regarding the student, the context, the assignment and so forth. At this time the presenter might also share any surprises or unexpected feedback heard during the earlier steps.
6) Reflecting and Discussing – The group facilitator invites open discussion, asking participants to reflect on the experience of the protocol in light of their own larger experiences in teaching and learning. Everyone discusses what the next instructional steps are. He or she also may ask participants to share what they found particularly helpful or difficult while participating in the activity and also how they might use the protocol in their own work with colleagues and/or students. "What new understandings have I come to? What new ideas do I have for my students? Based on what I saw today, what strategies might I use?"
7) Variations – If the group is experienced, smaller groups can be facilitated enabling simultaneous conferences to occur. For a large group, a fishbowl can be used, with 6-10 volunteers, with an experienced group facilitator and presenter, and all others observing. Step 6 can then be open to observers and participants.

When listening to colleagues' thinking:
- Listen without judging.
- Tune in to differences in perspectives.
- Use controversy as an opportunity to explore and hear from others.
- Focus on understanding where different interpretations come from.

Adapted from The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice, Second Edition(2007), J. P. McDonald, N. Mohr, A. Dichter, E. C. McDonald, pg. 80-83

Protocol for Exploring Student Work – Analysis of Student Work

The purpose of this protocol is to shift a teacher's focus from instructional moves and student behaviors to analysis of learning outcomes and the development of differentiation strategies. As a result of thoughtful engagement with other protocol participants, teacher gain new insights into gaps in student learning as well as a better understanding of their own learning needs with regard to content and instructional practices. The protocol can be used with any set of content and performance standards and can provide enhanced opportunities for teachers at any stage of their careers (novice to experienced/veteran). This protocol uses a two-stage protocol, where the first stage serves as necessary preparation for the second stage. Each stage takes about an hour and can be done on different days or on the same day. Chart paper and markers are needed for recording ideas. There are five steps in each stage.

Stage 1 – May be done by one grade level.	Stage 2 – May be done across grade levels.
1) Assignment and Expectations – The presenting teacher briefly describes the assignment that resulted in the student work to be presented, then describes his or her expectations in terms of qualities that would be present in the work if it fully met standards. The presentation may refer to a district- or teacher-developed rubric. The facilitator records the expected qualities on chart paper. (10 minutes)	6) Introduction – The group facilitator from Stage 1 of the protocol briefly describes the steps accomplished in that Stage – noting the source and size of the original sample, the qualities of work that the participants associated with meeting standards and the pattern hunches they made. The presenting teacher adds any additional details that he or she wishes. (3 minutes)
2) Reactions and Adjustments – This is an optional step. Participants (including the presenter) react to the list of expected qualities and adjust for clarity, specificity and relation to standards or rubrics with which they are familiar. The point is not to force a substitution of the colleagues' expectations for the teacher's but to encourage common expectations. (10 minutes)	7) Description of Student Performance Across Categories – Starting with the work sample that meets the standard, participates generate a concise list of descriptors relative to the standard. The group facilitator charts these descriptors where all can see. The descriptors should be concrete based on evident features. For the work samples below standard, the descriptors should refer not to just shortcomings but also to strengths on which the student might build. During this step, the facilitator or presenting teacher may make reference to the pattern analysis of Stage 1. In what ways does each student fit or not fit any of the pattern hunches? Do other patterns emerge here that did not surface in the earlier Stage? (10 minutes)
3) Assessment of Work Samples – Participants (including the presenter) look at each example of student work together and assess the work according to the degree to which it meets the standard. They assign it to one of four categories: far below standard, approaching standard, meeting standard or exceeding standard. Using a graphic organizer, the facilitator records the first names of each student in the appropriate category. (20-30 minutes)	8) Clarification of Student Learning Needs – In this step, the participants go beyond evident features of the work samples to infer what each student needs to know or be able to do in order to progress to a higher level of understanding or performance. The presenting teacher can add additional information about the student's past performance on similar tasks, individual challenges and strengths, learning preferences, and so on. The inferences are recorded (10-15 minutes)
4) Pattern Analysis – Once all the student work has been discussed and sorted by category, participants look for any patterns they may discern in the sorting, including those related to the gender, language, cultural background, disability or program affiliation of the students, plus any other factors that seem relevant. Here the presenter's knowledge of the students takes precedence, but questions raised by other participants may prove crucial to discernment. If the work all comes from a single class- and particularly if the work is a whole class set – it will be useful to calculate the percentages of students in each category. These "pattern hunches" are charted for reference during Stage 2 (10 minutes)	9) Discussion of Differentiation Strategies – The group facilitator invites participants to discuss and suggest teaching strategies that might help each of the four students to advance in the quality of their work. These may be ones that could be undertaken by the teacher within the context of a whole class. They also might include suggestions related to supplementary curricular resources or student services. The group facilitator reminds participants of the patterns of hunches identified earlier and asks how any of the strategies suggested might beneficially interrupt patterns. The presenting teacher makes notes in whatever format may be most useful for future planning purposes. (20 minutes)
5) Selection of Representative Student Work From Each Category – The presenting teacher selects a student work sample from each category for further analysis and discussion. These are the work samples that move to Stage 2. Note that for use in Stage 2, copies should be made of the samples, with the identities of the students masked.	10) Closure and Debriefing – The group facilitator asks the presenting teacher to make any final comments regarding the process and asks all participants to comment on the protocol itself, including any ways in which it has provided insight into concerns related to their own students' performance. (5-10 minutes)
Adapted from The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice, Second Edition (2007), J. P. McDonald, N. Mohr, A. Dichter, E. C. McDonald, pg. 88-89	

Tuning Protocol

This protocol was developed by David Allen and Joe McDonald at the Coalition of Essential Schools primarily for use in looking closely at student exhibitions. However, the process is very adaptable for a variety of OIP uses, for example when strategy managers are presenting monitoring data and information.

In the outline below unless otherwise noted, time allotments indicated are the suggested minimum for each task.

I. Introduction [10 minutes]. Facilitator briefly introduces protocol goals, norms and agenda. Participants briefly introduce themselves.

II. Teacher Presentation [20 minutes]. Presenter (e.g., strategy manager) describes the context for the work and presents evidence of the student work (data and information, may include samples of the work).

III. Clarifying Questions [15 minutes maximum]. Members ask questions to better understand what has been presented.

IV. Pause to Reflect on Warm and Cool Feedback [2-3 minutes maximum]. Presenter and members make note of "warm," positive feedback and “cool," more critical feedback.

V. Warm and Cool Feedback [15 minutes]. Members, among themselves, share responses to the evidence and its context; presenter is silent. The facilitator may lend focus by reminding participants of an area of emphasis.

VI. Reflection/ Response [15 minutes]. Presenter reflects on and responds to comments or questions. Members are silent. The facilitator may clarify or lend focus.

VII. Debrief [10 minutes]. Beginning with the presenter ("How did the protocol experience compare with what you expected?"), the group discusses any frustrations, misunderstandings or positive reactions members have experienced. More general discussion of the tuning protocol may develop.

Guidelines for Facilitators

1. Be assertive about keeping time. A protocol that doesn't allow for all the components will do a disservice to the presenter, the work presented and the participants' understanding of the process. Don't let one participant monopolize.

2. Be protective of presenters. By making the work more public, presenters are exposing themselves to kinds of critiques they may not be used to. Inappropriate comments or questions should be recast or withdrawn. Try to determine just how "tough" your presenter wants the feedback to be.

3. Be provocative of substantive discourse. Many presenters may be used to blanket praise. Without thoughtful but probing "cool" questions and comments, they won't benefit from the tuning protocol experience. Presenters often say they'd have liked more coolfeedback

Protocol for Developing "Look Fors"

This protocol is a procedure to guide groups to develop adult implementation "look-fors" specific to the district plan indicators. Its' focus is on developing the "WHAT" or the content in the "look fors", not the HOW or the process.

1. Review the connection of task to OIP.

a) Identify the strategy from the district plan.

b) Identify the specific indicator for which data needs to be collected in order to measure progress.

c) Describe how the indicator relates to the first two components of the overall monitoring system.

- What to Monitor - may relate to strategy and/or actions
- What to Gather - identification of "look fors"

What do you expect to see across the district in specific observable behavioral terms? Would you want to observe adult behaviors, student behaviors or both? What type segments of practice are you going to "look for" - routine, content specific, or segments enacted on the spot?

Note that the DLT will want to identify a few critical "look fors." BLTs may expand beyond these few depending on the building plan.

d) Emphasize the necessity of developing "look fors" that reflect the criteria or features of a good "look for"

- Explicit about what is to be seen
- Evidence-based
- Transparent to everyone
- Focused
- Manageable
- Specific to district plan strategy/action
- Meets Ohio grade level expectations, when applicable

e) Share cautions:

- Too much is too much
- Less is more
- Process may take a year or more to internalize; think big, start smal

2. Describe and define the indicator content.

a) Describe the terms that need to be defined in the indicators, starting first with the content. May need to revisit why the indicator was selected based on the data from the DF and research.

b) Determine if there is an agreed upon definition of the content.

This may be done by creating a two column T-chart of "What it is" and "What it isn't". Brainstorming responses and then asking:

- Is it clearly understood by all?
- What does it look like across the district?
- Are there differences among grade levels or content areas?

3. Reach consensus on the <u>few</u> things that the DLT wants to see as evidence that the strategy content is being implemented (observable behaviors).

a) What will the DLT expect to see from adults?

b) What will the DLT expect to see from students?

c) What will the DLT expect to see in the classroom environment?

d) Check to see that "look fors" meet criteria.

4. Describe and define other monitoring system components.

a) When to Gather and Submit Data - degree, amount or frequency for implementation, monitoring, reporting.

b) Who Will Provide and Gather Data - Who will be reviewing or observing this indicator? Who will provide the initial data and who will summarize the data, e.g., data teams?

c) How to Gather Data - What is the format and methods for collecting the data, quantitative and qualitative (observations, document review, examining student work, etc.)?

d) How to Record Data – What is the collecting/reporting format? How will it record quantitative as well as qualitative data? What is to be reported to the BLT? To the DLT? To teacher-based teams?

e) How to Manage Monitoring Data - How will the data be rolled up and back? Determine: if paper/pencil or technology will be used; how data will be stored/archived and used for comparison over time to demonstrate improvement; how to know the reason(s) for improvement or lack thereof. Who is responsible for managing the data?

f) How to Communicate Monitoring Expectations & Results – Determine: how the DLT will communicate: a) common definitions, b) teacher and/or student behaviors and/or c) environmental expectations for implementation; and how the information will flow up and down the system.

5. Determine next steps.

a) Develop "look fors" for all plan indicators and identify those that may be crosscutting.

b) Forewarn the DLT that adjustments may need to be made to the IM/M, as baseline data was probably not available when the plan was originally developed.

c) Collect baseline data using "look fors".

d) Revisit task list for possible modification.

e) Consider what support is needed to make use of data in instructional decision-making.

f) Check against professional development identified in plan. What training might be needed or modified?

g) (Other)

.

Protocol for Analyzing Success

This protocol's purpose is to engage colleagues in collaborative analysis of cases from practice in order to understand the circumstances and actions that make them successful ones, and then to apply this understanding to future practice. The DLT would work in small groups of 3 to 6 individuals. Chart paper or LCDs should be available. The size of the small groups will determine the length of the activity, with variations of 1 to 2 hours. There are eight steps to using this protocol.

> **TIP**: If DLT/BLT members are asked to prepare their own cases in advance, the OIP facilitator should give them a few minutes to review their notes. This will ensure that people are focused and provide those who did not actually prepare a chance to develop their thinking.

1) Preparing a Case – Each participant is asked to reflect on and write (in the form of notes) a short case describing one area where he or she is finding success or making progress in practice. The case should include specific details concerning his or her own involvement in it – what he or she did that may have contributed to its success. It also should account for other factors that may underlie the success, including any favorable conditions present. This step may be done in advance of the DLT meeting. (10 minutes)
2) Sharing – In the small groups, the first person shares orally his or her case of successful practice while the others take notes. (5 minutes)
3) Analysis and Discussion – The group reflects on the success. Participants offer their own insights into what made this case of practice successful. They discuss specifically what they think the presenter may have done to contribute to success, and they also name what they take to be other factors involved. The presenter is encouraged to participate and is prodded through questioning. (5 minutes)

> **TIP**: When participants make generalized statements, the OIP Facilitator should remind them to say what they did themselves, since this is helpful in demystifying success.

4) Repeating the Pattern – Repeat steps 2 and 3 for each member of the group.
5) Compilation – The group then compiles on chart paper a list of specific, successful behaviors and underlying principles that seem characteristic of the cases presented. (5 minutes)
6) Reporting Out – If there are multiple small groups, the groups report out in some way, for example, by means of posting lists around the room and "gallery walking" to read all the lists. (5 minutes)
7) Discussion – The facilitator prompts a general discussion with the questions. *"Do the lists have elements in common? Do any contain behaviors or underlying principles that surprised you?"* (10 minutes)
8) Debriefing – Still in the large group, the facilitator asks, *"How might we apply what we have learned in this protocol to other parts of our work? How might BLTs/collaborative teams/students use this protocol or a variation of it to reflect on their work?"*

Variation

The OIP Facilitator may ask that everyone focus on the same theme, e.g., a successful staff meeting, a successful peer observation or a successful project design. Small groups compile a composite list and report out. The OIP Facilitator then leads a general discussion about common successful practices. Overall questions are: What have we learned? How are we learning? Where has it worked/not worked and Why? What supports are we providing that contributed to success?

Adapted from The Power of Protocols: An Educator's Guide to Better Practice, Second Edition (2007), J. P. McDonald, N. Mohr, A. Dichter, E. C. McDonald, pg. 60-63