

WORKING TOGETHER

“What has been discovered is that, first, people will not voluntarily share knowledge unless they feel some moral commitment to do so; second, people will not share knowledge unless the dynamics of change favor exchange; and third, data without relationships merely cause more information glut. Put another way, turning information into knowledge is a social process, and for that you need good relationships.”

- Michael Fullan

Group Development

- **Attention to task**
- **Attention to process**
- **Attention to relationship**

Productive groups learn from experience by setting goals for themselves, monitoring their performance and reflecting on their practice. Experience by itself is not a reliable teacher. By focusing only on the tasks at hand, groups may complete that task but do not expand their capacities for doing harder or more sophisticated work.

The harnesses of draft horses are fitted with blinders to block peripheral vision and keep the horse's attention on the road or furrow ahead. Many groups operate with similar blinders when they do not attend to organizing their tasks to increase their efficiency and productivity; when they do not attend to developing their process toolkit for supporting thinking and clear communication; and when they do not attend to developing relationships within the group, to build their capacities for collaboration and strengthening professional community .

ATTENTION TO TASK

Productive groups plan for and monitor the following task dimensions, making necessary adjustments to improve their practices:

Task designs are learning-focused: the group establishes task priorities that are congruent with organizational values, uses data to focus its attention and energy, and relates specific tasks to larger systems issues and frameworks

Task designs are time and energy efficient: the group establishes and maintains clear task and product success criteria, establishes and maintains clear task agendas, and uses data effectively to make decisions.

Task designs are data-driven: the group collects and selects relevant data for its work, develops and utilizes effective data displays, and uses data effectively to make decisions.

ATTENTION TO RELATIONSHIPS

Improving groups balance task and process dimensions with equal attention to developing the group as a whole.

Relationships grow when: shared norms and values ensure psychological safety for all group members: group members behave congruently with agreed upon norms, and filter choices and decisions through agreed upon values.

Relationships grow when participation is balanced and contributions from others are encouraged: group members seek and honor diverse perspectives, and anticipate and accept that productive conflict contributes to group success.

Relationships grow and professional community develops when group members engage purposely with relevant tasks that are focused on student learning and consistently use data to self assess and reflect.

ATTENTION TO PROCESS

Productive groups plan for and monitor the following process dimensions, making necessary adjustments to improve practices:

Process aware groups develop shared tools and structures: the group applies tools and structures for focusing its tasks, follows agreed upon protocols, and refocuses if members deviate from task agreements or process guidelines.

Process aware groups structure learning-focused conversations: group members invite and sustain the thinking of others by pausing, paraphrasing and inquiring, give their full attention to others through eye contact, listen non judgmentally and listen without interrupting; balance advocacy for their own ideas with inquiry into the ideas of others.

Process aware groups structure data driven dialogue: the group uses data to focus and calibrate conversations, inquires into and clarifies their own and others' assumptions, and seeks shared understanding of ideas, opinions and perspectives.