CFIP DATA ANALYSIS MEETING: GRADE 4 MATH

As you read this story about a CFIP data dialogue, notice that there are really three instructional conversations based on data embedded in the CFIP protocol:

1. *An analysis of the results of a common assessment that was recently administered by team members (CFIP Steps 3-4)*
2. *A review of the results of the re-teaching and re-assessment conducted since the last CFIP dialogue (CFIP Step 5)*
3. *A look ahead at a future difficult topic for the students and dialogue on how it might be taught more effectively (CFIP Step 6)*

It's 10 a.m. on a cold January Tuesday morning. All the fourth grade math teachers have common planning time, so, one by one, Marcus, Breanna, Kami, and Roger enter the grade-level conference area.

Each week, the four grade 4 math teachers administer some type of common assessment in math. Sometimes, it's a district-written benchmark, short cycle, or unit test. At other times, the teachers have collaborated to develop their own mini-assessment that focuses on one or two essential common core concepts and skills being taught that week.

Today, the group will be analyzing student performance on a cumulative real-world performance task that the district generated modeled after the prototype assessments on the PARCC website. It's Kami's week to be the facilitator for the group, a job they rotate, so she will assume responsibility for session planning and follow-up. Team members have already scored the assessment, based on the rubric that they generated, and they bring the data to the meeting in "talkable" form.

Participants sit around the table. After "hellos" all around and some good-natured ribbing, they settle in to their use of the Classroom-Focused Improvement Process (CFIP) data analysis protocol. Since Kami is leading the dialogue, Marcus will use his laptop to take notes on the CFIP template used throughout the school. The template was adopted by the faculty to help structure conversations and to result in data-based and actionable conclusions to implement.

As CFIP's first step, the group reviews important information about the assessment that their students just completed, such as the major concepts and skills that were covered; any "quirks" in the test itself, including poorly-worded directions; and student behavior during the test administration that might have influenced their scores,

like if a disruption occurred or if there was a fire drill while the test was being given. When they analyze data from the district's information management system, they also make sure everyone understands what the numbers mean on the data-reporting forms.

Moving on to CFIP's Step 2, the group posts the question that they want to answer from the data on a big piece of chart paper so it will remain in view. They find that this helps them to focus and keeps "birdwalks" (off-topic conversations) to a minimum. Today's question is, "How prepared are our students for the PARCC performance assessment that they will take in two months?" Sometimes, the question is as simple as, "What do we know now, that we did not know two weeks ago, about student achievement in _____ (an essential grade 4 math concept)?"

Data are analyzed by the team at as finely a grained level as possible. For this assessment, for example, the group will examine student performance on several essential skills and concepts from the district performance task that are included in their grade-level Maryland Common Core Curriculum Framework.

As they move on to CFIP's Step 3, the team always starts with the positives. They were pleased to see that there were several essential computational skills in which almost all the students were proficient. They list these on the CFIP template. On the other hand, a few skills "pop out" of the data as still problematic for almost all students, and these are noted on the template as well.

Beginning CFIP's Step 4, the team reflects on why they think students were not successful on these skills. They hypothesize that it may be that their class expectations were less than those required in the "PARCC-like" assessment and that they may have covered the weak topics too superficially, without giving students sufficient time to work with and process the new knowledge.

Team members then consider the several options that they face in response to the data. Among them are to:

- Reteach the weak skills to the entire class.
- Integrate the weak skills seamlessly into instruction in their next unit.
- Give students additional practice time -- but no additional instruction -- on the weak skills through drills and warm-up activities.
- Move on to new content, knowing that students will encounter the same skill again later this year or next.

Because one of the weak skills involves the number line and is so central to understanding future Common Core mathematics concepts, Bre suggests that they re-teach it to the entire class. The group then brainstorms to identify an innovative strategy to teach the un-mastered topic, since their previous approaches have not been as successful as they had hoped. This is always the hardest part of the meeting. It may take several minutes, or even a second session with time in between to investigate best instructional practices, for them to come to closure. Eventually, an instructional strategy is decided upon that all four agree to try in the next week and to track the results.

Once the method and time frame have been established for the team's response to the performance task data, the group moves on to CFIP's Step 5, the review of the results of their re-teaching of a previous week's essential computational skill relating to multiplication. This need evolved from their analysis of an exit ticket that everyone used a few weeks ago.

Team members are pleased that some pupils consistently excel week after week. They discuss briefly how learning will be enriched for these students and how they will be challenged to continue performing at a high level.

On the other hand, team members are not surprised to find that there are a few students who are still not proficient in multiplication, even after the re-teaching. They list these students' names on the template and plan to take advantage of the parallel scheduling arrangement to regroup the students by skill needs on Friday.

Because teachers have the autonomy to move students from teacher to teacher for focused instruction, there is little talk of "my" students and "your" students. The focus is on the success of all "our" students.

The team decides that Marcus will work with the students who are ready for enrichment, and Bre will teach the large group that requires just a little more review of the number line concepts needed to complete the performance task. Roger and Kami will provide intensive tutoring for the students who still do not understand the concepts behind or are unable to use the number line to its fullest advantage, bringing in as many physical manipulatives and visual representations as they can find. They will also try to incorporate the needed multiplication practice, if possible.

The final CFIP step is unique in that it is forward looking and not in response to previous data. So, the team takes the few minutes left in the meeting to preview topics to be taught over the next couple of weeks and to apply their experience and previous

years' assessment results to identify a skill or concept that students always seem to find difficult. Further work with fractions jumps out at them as fitting these criteria. The goal is to use the most effective instructional strategy possible with the upcoming tough content so that more students will be successful through the initial teaching, thereby cutting down on the follow-up needed. Since this planning will take a while, they resolve to touch base informally a few times before the next CFIP session, as ideas occur to them.

Finally, as facilitator for the week, Kami takes a quick pulse of the team: "Do we all feel that the meeting was worthwhile?" "What could we do next time to improve the flow or effectiveness of our limited meeting time?"

The planning time is about to end, so the four teammates must rush back to their classrooms. While the team will not formally get together for another data dialogue for two week, there will probably be four or five instructionally-oriented conversations "on the fly," as two or three teachers meet in the faculty room or while on hall duty.

Marcus will finalize notes on the CFIP template and e-mail it immediately to the team members so they can follow-up. A copy will also go to the assistant principal, from whom they usually get positive feedback, offers of support, or specific suggestions of resources that they had not considered.