

Things to Think About When You Are Developing a Particular PD Session

The “Why” of the Session

1. Meaningful content. Is there a “big idea” or an “enduring understanding” you want your participants to grapple with? What is it?

2. Audience. Will you work with your whole faculty? A grade-level group? Novice teachers? Experienced teachers? Are there any ways you want to tailor this session specifically for a particular group?

2. Tangible learning. What learning are you hoping your faculty will take from this session? This could include new information, new or reinforced skills, deepened awareness of an issue or idea; it could also include tangible feelings, like inspiration, deepened curiosity, or being moved.

3. Coherence. How does this session’s work fit into the bigger picture? What is the learning/teaching trajectory that you are imagining? Are you building on ideas and practices that have come before? Does this session’s work lead into future work?

4. Incorporating past experience. Is there feedback, formal or informal, on what your faculty got out of a previous session or experience, and how they felt about it, that informs this session plan?

The Structure of the Session

5. **Introduction.** How will you get started so that the beginning of the session launches your topic in a coherent way? Do you want to make some kind of a “splash” for fun and to engage interest? Do you want to take some quiet time to help participants feel centered? Will movement or stillness work best? Will you let participants know what’s coming (for coherence and predictability) or make it a surprise (to nurture discovery and spontaneity)?

6. **What’s the “it”?** You’ve got a big idea; is there one or more core texts or problems you’ll be working on together?

7. **Variety in modes of engagement.** What are your activities? Will participants work alone, in pairs, small groups, as a whole group, or some combination of these? Will they talk, write, move their bodies, use their hands? Is there enough variety in these modes that all of your participants, with their different learning styles and predilections, will find their way into the action?

8. **Preparing materials.** What materials do you need? Are there things you might create that could help scaffold the learning? Handouts? Worksheets? Text Study Questions?

9. **Feedback loop.** How will you know what participants got out of the session and how they enjoyed it, so that you can build that information into your next session? What specific questions will you ask, and/or what ways will you collect feedback?

10. **Closure.** How will you end the session in a way that will contribute to some of these things: connection among the group members, integration of the learning, excitement and curiosity about next time? Is there any other purpose you want your “closure” to serve?