

Understanding Teaching Conditions

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TEXAS COMPREHENSIVE CENTER



Objectives

- To understand what teaching conditions are and why the quality of teaching conditions matter
- To discover how teaching conditions data (macro and micro) can be used at district and school levels to create a more positive teaching and learning environment
- To understand how state and districts have used teaching conditions data to support improvement efforts
- To assess current teaching conditions within your district using the Teaching Conditions Continuum to identify strategies for improvement efforts

Agenda

- What Are Working and Teaching Conditions?
- Why Do Teaching Conditions Matter?
- Data Collection Methods
- State and District Examples
- Work Session: Teaching Conditions Continuum Assessment
- Share out

What Are Their Working Conditions?



What Are Working Conditions?

Based on your own personal experience and perceptions, rank the pictures in the order of your perception of the working conditions represented from most favorable to least favorable.

Rank order the pictures from one to eight.

- One is the picture with the MOST positive conditions.
- Eight is the picture with the LEAST positive conditions.

Handout 2: What Are Working Conditions?

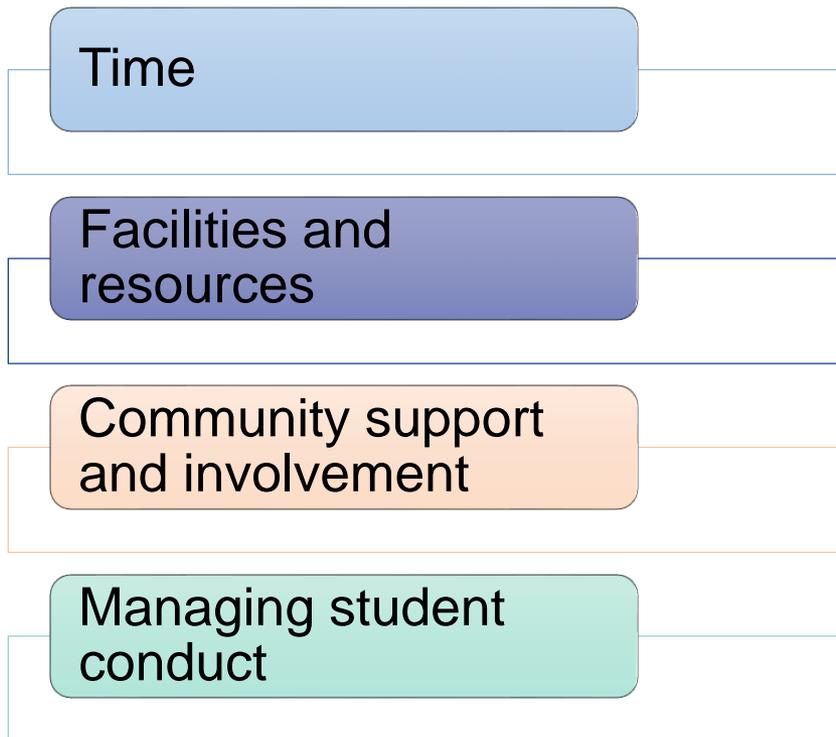
Group Share Out

- In what ways was the criteria you used to arrange the pictures similar or different to other participants in your group?
- What were the group processes you used to come to agreement about the picture order?
- In what ways might these working conditions play a part in determining the quality of your work or your desire to remain working in that particular role?

Transitioning to the School Setting

- What are the words, phrases, or conditions that come to you when we use the term teaching conditions?
- Write down 3 ideas and share with a partner. Then share out with your table group.
- Look for patterns and common language

What Are Teaching and Learning Conditions?



Source: <http://teachingconditions.org/constructs>

Handout 3a: Teaching and Learning Conditions

Why Do Teaching Conditions Matter

It's About Keeping Effective Teachers

North Carolina Survey Item	Future Employment Plans of Educators		Stayers Minus Movers
	Stayers <i>n</i> = 74,954 82.3%	Movers <i>n</i> = 6,906 7.6%	
School Leadership	76.0%	34.8%	41.2%
Teacher Leadership	70.3%	37.0%	33.3%
Managing Student Conduct	82.8%	50.4%	32.4%
Instructional Practices and Support	69.6%	40.7%	29.0%
Time	72.0%	47.1%	24.9%
Community Support	76.3%	51.6%	24.7%
Professional Development	65.9%	41.3%	24.6%
Resources	84.1%	65.2%	18.9%

Where You Sit Shapes How You See Things

2013 TELL Kentucky Questions With the Greatest Difference Between Principals and Teachers	Percent Agreement		
	Principals	Teachers	Difference
Efforts are made to minimize the amount of routine paperwork teachers are required to do.	93.0	54.1	38.9
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.	98.8	70.2	28.6
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	99.0	71.3	27.7
Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruptions.	95.5	69.0	26.5
Teachers are assigned classes that maximize their likelihood of success with students.	98.1	72.1	26.0
The noninstructional time provided for teachers in my school is sufficient.	90.8	65.2	25.6
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this school.	97.6	73.0	24.6
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	97.0	72.9	24.1

Data Collection Methods

Data Collection Methods

Macro Level

1. Anonymous Survey
2. Practice Rubric



Micro Level

1. Guided Discussion
2. Individual Item Prompts



Purposes of Data Collection Methods

Anonymous Survey and Continuum

Scan multiple conditions quickly.

Identify which conditions are in most need of improvement.

Compare school teaching conditions.

Function electronically and without formal group meeting.

Guided Discussions and Individual Item Prompts

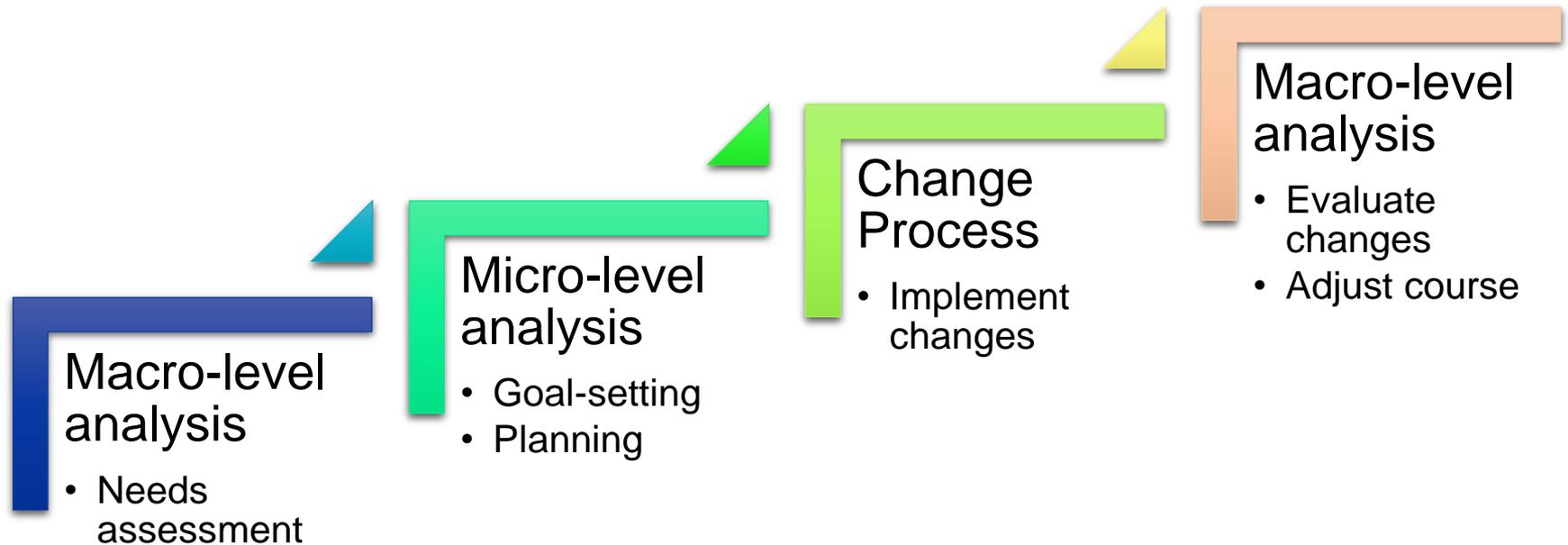
Involve deep investigation of one specific school condition.

Have potentially great contextual detail.

Require a group setting.

Involve topics that are potentially sensitive for participants and that require extra attention.

Data Collection Cycle of Continuous Improvement



Teaching Conditions Implementation: Stories from the Field

Teaching Conditions: Examples from the Northeast

Connecticut – multi-state and multi-district approach

Maine – multi-district approach

Example 1



Improved
Human Capacity



Improved
Structural
Capacity

Team from Rhode Island guided principals through:

- Aligning principal practice rubric with the teaching conditions
- Integrating teaching conditions into goal setting

Example 2



Improved
Human Capacity



Improved
Structural
Capacity

Teams from Massachusetts and Connecticut collected and interpreted school-level discipline data and used results to:

- Inform improvements to their discipline referral system (e.g., disproportionality)
- Plan professional learning around classroom management

Example 3



Improved
Organizational
Capacity

Considering **community of practice** to share implementation progress and lessons learned

How do we know this support is making a difference in the field?



District	Data Collection Plans and Progress
Auburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveying staff to prioritize teaching conditions
Mount Desert Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designing brief staff survey to administer in November• Interpreting data and action planning in November
MSAD 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focusing on managing student conduct• Analyzing existing data (several sources) to refine discipline system and data reporting practices
Portland	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritized teaching conditions focus area during staff meeting• Designing focus groups to dive deeper into challenges
Windham	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploring teacher retention data as it relates to each teaching condition• Designing focus groups with novice and veteran teachers

Working Conditions Data Activity

Macro-Level: Placement on a Continuum

- A continuum supports the interpretation and application of the teaching conditions standards.
- The process prepares school educators for school improvement planning.
- Evaluating your teaching conditions on a developmental continuum allows you consider where a school is developmentally on providing positive teaching conditions.

Example of Teaching Conditions Continuum

Element	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished
1a Teachers' class sizes facilitate high quality instruction.	Teachers' time to plan in order to meet the diverse learning needs of students is insufficient due to the demands of large class sizes, heavy course loads across a wide range of content areas, and/or assignments mismatched with training.	Teachers have time to plan in order to meet the diverse learning needs of students due to having appropriate class sizes, course loads, and assignments that match training.	Teachers routinely plan in order to meet the diverse learning needs of all students due to the coordinated design of class sizes, course loads, and student placement practices.	Teachers have maximum time to plan in order to meet the diverse learning needs of all students due to a school wide systematic approach to designing class sizes, course loads, and student placements.
1b Teachers have sufficient instructional time to provide all students with effective instruction.	<p>Teachers do not have enough uninterrupted instructional time.</p> <p>School leadership determines daily/weekly instructional schedules for teachers and supports teachers with little regard to protecting instructional time.</p> <p>There are frequent interruptions during instructional time that require teachers and/or students to respond to office communications and complete school business.</p>	<p>Teachers have minimum sufficient uninterrupted instructional time.</p> <p>School leadership determines daily/weekly instructional schedules for teachers and supports teachers with regard to protecting instructional time.</p> <p>School leadership seeks teachers' input on ways to limit the full range of interruptions in instruction experienced by teachers and students.</p>	<p>Teachers have sufficient uninterrupted instructional time to meet the diverse learning needs of all students.</p> <p>School leadership actively involves teachers in the design of daily/weekly instructional schedules for teachers, supports teachers, and provides instructional supports (i.e. media, technology, etc.) to ensure protection of instructional time.</p> <p>School leadership engages with teachers and support staff to ensure maximum instructional time and minimum interruptions in learning for all students.</p>	<p>Teachers have ample uninterrupted instructional time to provide instruction throughout the curriculum in ways that meet all students' diverse learning needs and ensure advancement in learning.</p> <p>School culture is focused on ensuring that each student receives maximum uninterrupted instructional time matched to his/her needs and that ensures advancement in learning.</p> <p>School leadership, teachers, and support staff consistently utilize and refine systems for maximizing instructional time in ways that advance student learning.</p>

Micro-Level 1: Guided Discussion With Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers can do the following:

- Sequence the thought process.
- Work independently or in conjunction with item prompts.
- Function in individual or group settings to capture evidence of teaching conditions.

What Is Ideal? What Are the Challenges?

Item:

Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.

WHAT WOULD THE IDEAL LOOK LIKE?

Teachers never have to cover other teachers' classes.

Teachers are never asked to a last-minute meeting for a child study or a local screening meeting.

School team, grade-level, and subject area meetings are efficient and pertinent. Everyone gets along and contributes equally.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Not practical.
There will be times teachers must cover for one another.

It is difficult to know when manifestations are due.
It is difficult to schedule all parties ahead of time and keep everyone up to speed.

The success of the meetings depends on the skill of the facilitator and the group members' relationships.
The needs of staff are different.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES?

Put a rotation in place for teacher coverage so the amount of times each teacher is called on is equitable.
Reward teachers who do cover other classes.

Reflect on the meeting process and improve the efficiency of the process. Mandate that teachers are notified ahead of time. Teachers are chosen who work with the child. The process is equitable for teachers.

Provide an outline for each kind of meeting, perhaps a model of what the meeting should look like. Make some meetings optional for skilled staff.

Group Share Out

1. What teaching conditions are area(s) of strength?
2. Which teaching conditions were identified as area(s) of improvement?
3. Based on the What is Next? What are the challenges graphic organizer exercise what are your next steps?
4. What did you like/not like about the tools? How did they help you focus and lead a structured discussion?

When Using Teaching Conditions Data Remember....

Check-In: When Using Teaching Conditions Data, Remember...

Teaching conditions are not about any one individual. They are a product of a community of educators working together over time and will require a community effort to improve them.

Perceptual data are real data. Educators' perceptions are their reality, and they will make decisions based on how they perceive conditions.

Check-In:

When Using Teaching Conditions Data, Remember...

Conversations need to be structured and safe. Data help frame conversations without pointing fingers or assigning blame, allowing participants to feel safe.

A common understanding of your school's conditions needs to be created. Teaching conditions data collection is a starting point, not an ending point. Data collected create a common language to improve the conditions important to teachers.

Check-In:

When Using Teaching Conditions Data, Remember...

Focus on what you can solve. Some issues are outside of teacher and school administrator control. Focus instead on where your school community can have success.

Solutions can be complex and long-term. Many conditions took years and different faculties to create them. Similarly, it will take time and effort to reform them. They will likely not get resolved in a one-and-done training.

Resources

Individual Item Prompts

Prompts are used to guide reflective, collaborative conversations about specific school conditions.

There is a series of reflective prompts for nearly every question in the survey; prompts are available online at <http://teachingconditions.org/individual-item-prompts>.

Prompts are not the only questions to ask, but they do provide a starting point for dialogue.

Examples of Surveys

- NTC's Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning Survey
- Johnson's School Working Conditions
- Cleveland Municipal School District
- University of Chicago's 5Essentials

Additional Resources

GTL Center's Guide to Evaluation Products at
<http://resource.tqsource.org/gep/>

National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning
Environments School Climate Compendium at
<http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/school-climate-measurement/school-climate-survey-compendium.>”

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