

Understanding Teacher Working Conditions

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Project Elevate

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Center on
GREAT TEACHERS & LEADERS

at American Institutes for Research ■



Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

HELLO
my name is

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders' Mission

The mission of the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders (GTL Center) is to foster the capacity of vibrant networks of practitioners, researchers, innovators, and experts to build and sustain a seamless system of support for great teachers and leaders for every school in every state in the nation.

Comprehensive Centers Program

2012–17 Award Cycle



- Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes
- Center on Standards and Assessments Implementation
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- The New Teacher Center (NTC) is dedicated to improving student learning by accelerating the effectiveness of new teachers and school leaders. NTC partners with schools, districts, and states to deliver high-quality induction support, build school leadership capacity, enhance working conditions, and transform schools into vibrant learning communities.
- Since 2007, NTC has compiled more than 1 million surveys, providing more than 25,000 school reports to support educators and policymakers in identifying and improving teaching conditions.

Session Objectives

- To understand what teacher working conditions are and why the quality of conditions matters
- To discover how working conditions data can be used at the district and school levels to create a more positive teaching and learning environment
- To understand how to use various types of working conditions data to promote educator effectiveness and professional growth
- To initiate planning for district-level teacher working conditions data collection, analysis, and action

Agenda

Morning Session: 9:30–11:30 a.m.

- What Are Working Conditions?
- Why Teacher Working Conditions Matter
- Macro Data Collection

Lunch 11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Afternoon Session: 12:15–2:15 p.m.

- Micro Data Collection Methods
- Using District and School Data
- Next Steps for Team Planning Time

What Are Their Working Conditions?



What Are Working Conditions?

- Based on your own personal experience and perceptions, rank the pictures, from most favorable to least favorable, based on your perception of the working conditions represented.
 - Rank the pictures from 1 to 8. (1 = the picture with the MOST positive conditions; 8 = the picture with the LEAST positive conditions).

Handout 2: What Are Working Conditions?

What Are Working Conditions?

- Collaborate with your colleagues in table groups, and collectively organize, from most to least favorable working conditions, the pictures of workers in your packet.
- Come to a consensus about the order of the pictures most favorable working conditions: 1, 2, 3
- Share out per criteria

Group Share-Out

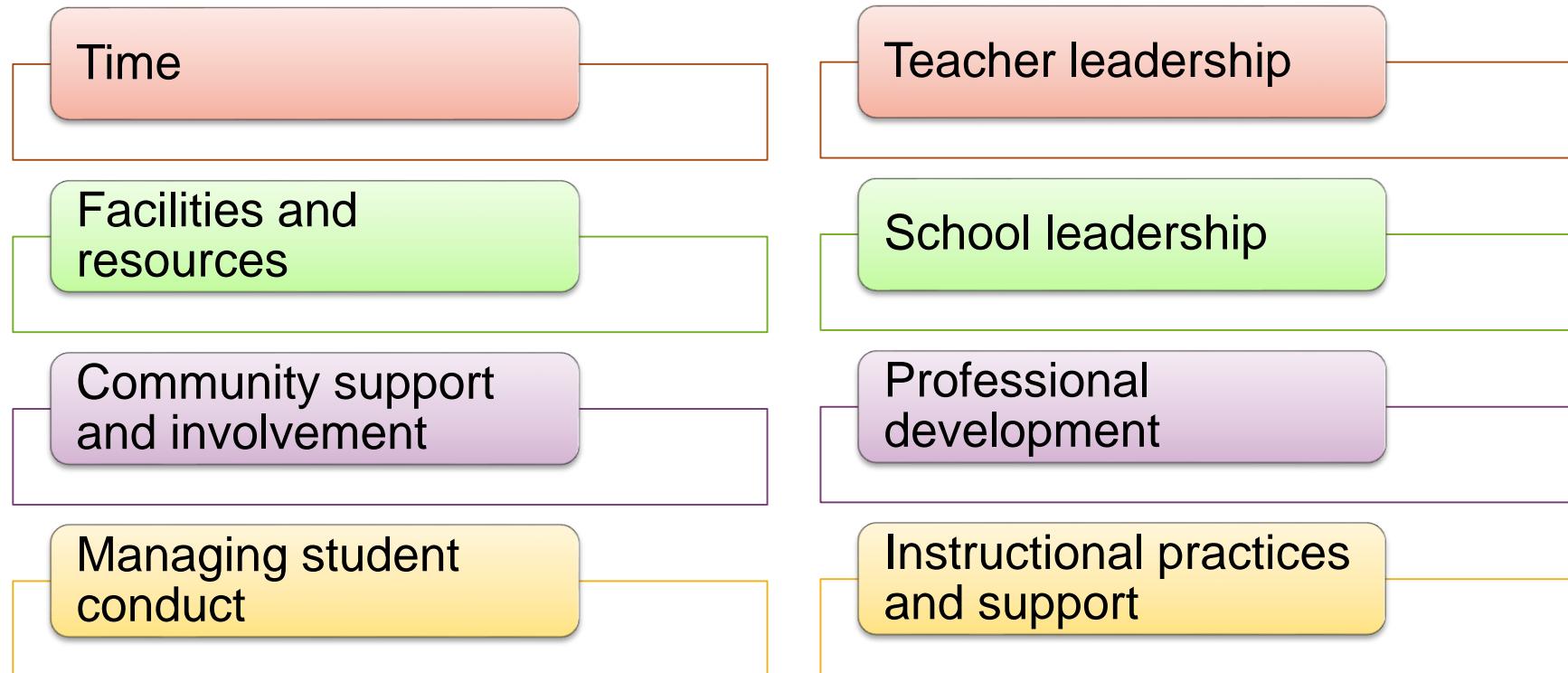
- In what ways were the criteria you used to arrange the pictures similar or different to the criteria used by other participants in your group?
- What were the group processes you used to come to agreement about the picture order?
- In what ways might these working conditions play a part in determining the quality of your work or your desire to remain working in that particular role?
- What are the words, phrases, or conditions that come to mind when we use the term ***teaching conditions***?

Conditions for Successful Teaching and Learning

“High-functioning systems can amplify the accomplishments of their educators, but a dysfunctional school or district can undermine the impact of even the best teachers. We need schools and districts whose climates and cultures, use of time, approaches to staffing, use of technology, deployment of services, and engagement of families and communities are optimized to continuously improve outcomes for the students they serve” (U.S. Department of Education, 2012, p. 3).

—One of seven elements identified as necessary to transform the teaching profession signed by the U.S. Department of Education, the National Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National School Boards Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the Council of the Great City Schools, and the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service [U.S. Department of Education. (2012, May 23). *Transforming the teaching profession*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/labor-management-collaboration/vision-statement.pdf>].

What Are Teaching and Learning Conditions?



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

Handout 3a: Teaching and Learning Conditions

What Are Teaching and Learning Conditions?

- Use Handout 3b.
 - Step 1. Go to www.teachingconditions.org.
 - Step 2. Review materials for the teaching condition construct assigned to your group.
 - Step 3. Determine data sources to assess that teaching condition construct (use Handout 4 for additional guidance).
 - Step 4. Determine the state-, district-, and school-level policies that affect the teaching condition construct.
- Share out.

What Are Teaching and Learning Conditions?

At your table, share:

- Was there anything that surprised you as being defined as a teaching and learning condition?
- How do these teaching and learning conditions look in your school?
- *After hearing everyone speak*, what are some of the data sources that could be used to assess teaching conditions?
- *After hearing everyone speak*, what are the factors that affect the teaching and learning conditions in your school?

Why Do Teaching Conditions Matter?

1. It's About Kids

It's About Kids

- Multiple components of the teaching environment (i.e., student conduct, demands on time, autonomy, professional development) are predictive of the following:
 - Student learning gains
 - Student perceptions of support and rigor
- Teacher working conditions can influence how effective a teacher is in a given context.

Sources: Boyd et al., 2011; Ferguson & Hirsch, 2014b; Johnson, 2006; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; Ladd, 2011

Why Do Teaching Conditions Matter?

1. It's About Kids
2. **It's About Keeping Effective Teachers**

It's About Keeping Effective Teachers

Teacher working conditions affect the following:

- Teachers' satisfaction with their jobs
- Teachers' motivation and efficacy (teacher attrition and teacher retention)
 - Teacher retention maintains instructional cohesion in a school.
 - Teacher attrition can be costly.

Sources: Almy & Tooley, 2012; Boyd et al., 2011; Exstrom, 2009

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%

It's About Keeping Effective Arizona Teachers

Teacher Working Conditions Survey Question	Percent of Teachers Who Agree		
	Stayers	Movers	Leavers
There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within the school	63%	22%	41%
Overall, the school leadership in my school is effective	63%	23%	43%
Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them	59%	21%	38%
In this school we take steps to solve problems	68%	30%	47%
School leadership communicates clear expectations to students and parents	66%	30%	47%
School leaders effectively communicate policies	63%	27%	45%

It's About Keeping Effective Arizona Teachers



Stemming the Tide of Teacher Attrition

How Working Conditions Influence Teacher Career Intentions and Other Key Outcomes in Arizona

*Barnett Berry and Ed Fuller with
Alice Williams
November 30, 2007*

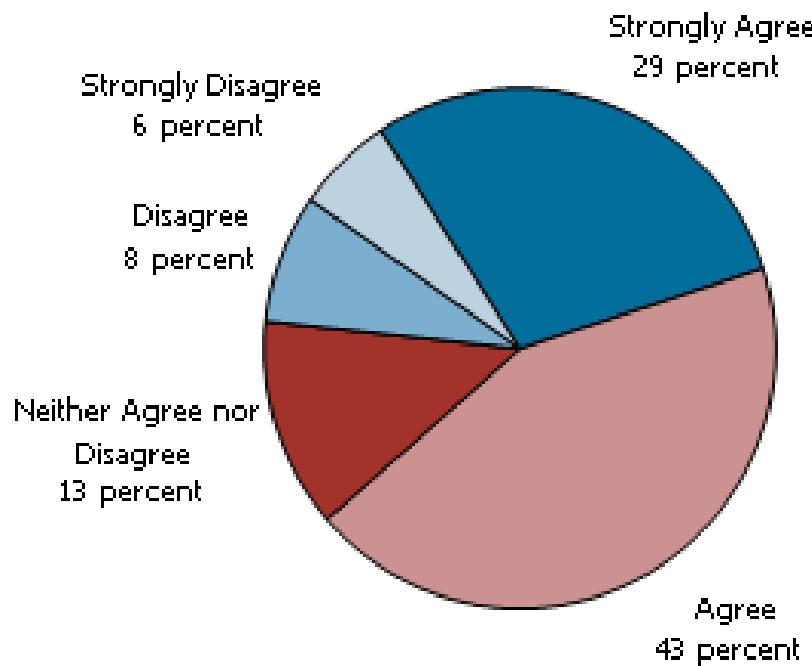


Stemming the Tide of Teacher Attrition: Key Findings

- Arizona educators are generally positive about their working conditions.
- Teachers and administrators have different perceptions.
- Arizona teachers are somewhat involved in classroom-level decisions but not in broader, school-level decisions (empowerment).
- Teachers clearly express a need for more time to collaborate.

Arizona Educators Are Generally Positive About Their Working Conditions

Figure 1: "Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn."



Why Do Teaching Conditions Matter?

1. It's About Kids
2. It's About Keeping Effective Teachers
3. **Where You Sit Shapes How You See Things**

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%

Where You Sit Shapes How You See Things: Arizona Teachers and Principals

School leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about:	Teachers Agreeing	Principals Agreeing
Leadership issues	40%	91%
Empowering teachers	45%	93%
The use of time in my school	44%	90%
Facilities and resources	51%	94%
New teacher support	52%	92%
Professional development	54%	93%

Where You Sit Shapes How You See Things: Arizona Teachers' Employment Plans

School leadership makes a sustained effort to address concerns about:	Percent of Teachers Who Agree		
	Stayers	Movers	Leavers
Empowering teachers	51%	16%	28%
New teacher support	57%	25%	37%
The use of time in my school	49%	18%	29%
Facilities and resources	57%	26%	39%
Professional development	59%	29%	40%
Leadership	45%	16%	27%

Where I sit shapes how I see things

Arizona survey finding

Leadership:

- There is a major disconnect between teachers and principals with conditions of teacher empowerment and school leadership.
- Using Handout 3a, *individually* reflect on each condition and self assess the percentage of teacher satisfaction at your school.

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

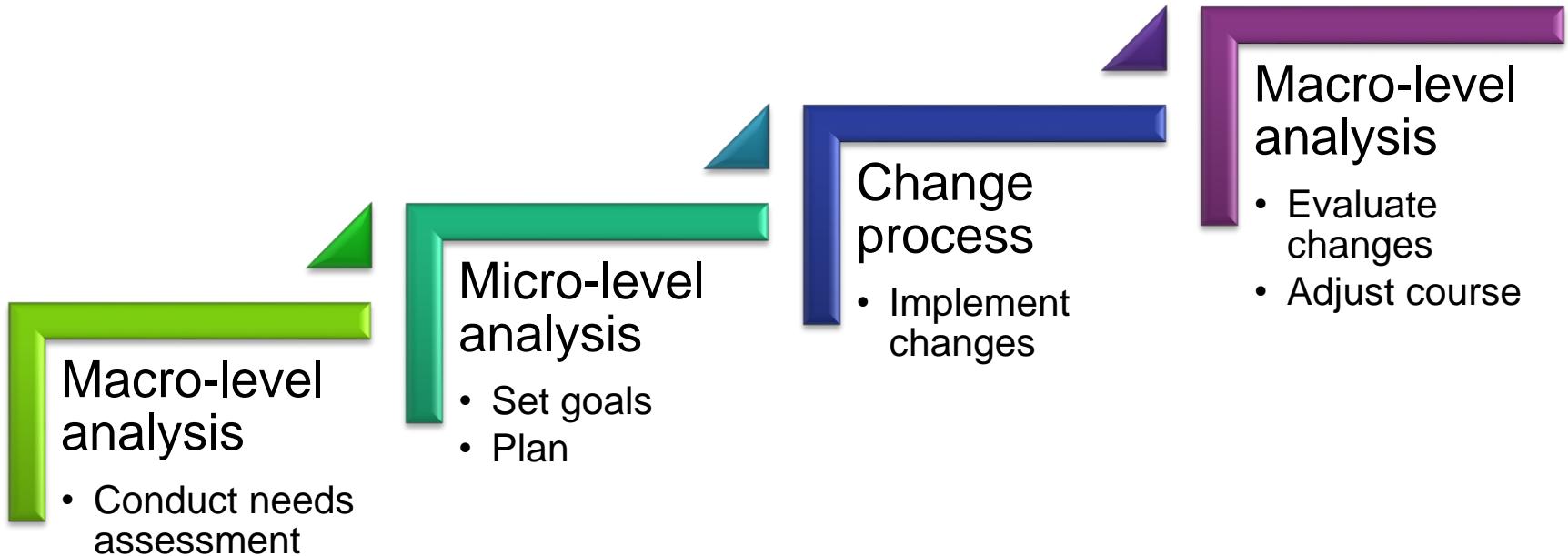
Anonymous Survey and Practice Rubric

- Scan multiple conditions quickly
- Identify which conditions are most in 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



Macro Level 1: Anonymous Survey of Educators

- Provides a vehicle in which educators can share their perceptions of teaching conditions in an open and safe manner
- Can be collected online:
 - Offers 24/7 access
 - Saves having to convene a faculty meeting
 - Can collect massive amounts of data across large areas
- Provides end users with a wealth of information to consider for school improvement planning
- Enables accurate application of precious resources to where they can be most beneficial

Activity: Experiencing Data From an Anonymous Survey

- Read and follow the directions on Handout 5.
- Schools A, C, and E are your case study schools.
 - Read the basic contextual information provided about each school.
- Have a conversation about the first steps you might consider taking toward the initiative
 - Consider multiple elements to discern supports needed to help your school.
- Record your thoughts on Handout 5a, Recording Organizer.
- **Select 1 school – A, C, or E, and identify Next Steps.**
- Create a poster with your plans and rationale
- Report out.

Check for Understanding

- In what ways do survey data enhance your understanding of the conditions across a district?
- How do these data inform conversations you may have at the district level for supporting an initiative?
- What policies (at the state, district, or school level) can be changed to affect the specific teaching?

Macro Level 2: Placement on a Practice Rubric

- A practice rubric 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 to consider where a school is at developmentally in providing positive teaching conditions.

Activity: Experiencing the Rubric

- Reflect on your school's conditions related to the area of Time.
- Use Handout 6a to examine the four elements from the Time Teaching Condition.
- Place your school *at, above, or below* the proficiency level of each element by marking an X.

Example of Teaching Conditions Indicators

Handout 6a: Teaching Conditions Proficiency—Time

Schools protect teachers' time to plan, collaborate, and provide effective instruction.

-	Proficient	+	Element	Indicator(s) of Proficiency
	X		<u>1a</u> Teachers' class sizes facilitate high quality instruction.	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.
	X		<u>1b</u> Teachers have sufficient time to provide all students with effective instruction.	Teachers have minimum sufficient uninterrupted instructional time. School leadership determines daily/weekly instructional schedules for teachers and supports teachers with regard to protecting instructional time. School leadership seeks teachers' input on ways to limit the full range of interruptions in instruction experienced by teachers and students.
X			<u>1c</u> Teachers have time during the school day to plan and collaborate.	Minimum sufficient time is provided during the school day for short- and long-term planning. Minimum sufficient time is available for teachers to work collaboratively to develop common plans and share effective lessons. There are limited interruptions to the non-instructional time provided to teachers. Teachers have the state minimum time to plan and collaborate (duty free lunch and a planning period).
		X	<u>1d</u> Schools make efforts to streamline processes to increase instructional time and decrease required paperwork.	School leadership makes some effort to minimize completion of school business during instructional time, to target essential assessments, and reduce the amount of associated paperwork.

Activity: Experiencing the Rubric

- Choose one element from your work.
 - Which element is below proficient (red)?
 - If more than one element is red, where should the focus be made?
 - If no element is below proficient, ***which area is the most relevant to your school's current improvement planning?***

Activity: Experiencing the Rubric

- Read through the full rubric (Handout 6b).
- Consider what other sources of data at your school may inform your placement on the rubric (Handout 4).
- Once you place your school on the rubric, consider how the information provided may be useful for school improvement planning.

Activity: Experiencing the Rubric

Element	Developing	Proficient	Accomplished	Distinguished
1d. Schools make efforts to streamline processes to increase instructional time and decrease required paperwork.	School leadership makes little or no effort to minimize associated paperwork.	School leadership makes some effort to minimize completion of school business during instructional time to target essential assessments and to reduce the amount of associated paperwork.	School leadership's efforts to streamline school business and effectively implement targeted assessments result in increased instructional time and reduced associated paperwork.	Schoolwide efforts allow for teachers to provide effective instruction that is free from constraints resulting from school business, required assessments, and other associated paperwork. X

Handout 6b: Teaching Conditions Rubric—Time

Check for Understanding

- How do the definitions in the rubric levels where you placed your school help you consider next steps?
- Compared with the previous exercise, in which you used survey results to drive discussions, in what ways does the addition of the narrative contained in the rubric change the conversation?

Enjoy Lunch!

11:30 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Check-In:

When Using Teaching Conditions Data, Remember...

- **Teaching conditions are not about any one individual.** Teaching conditions 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 educators 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...

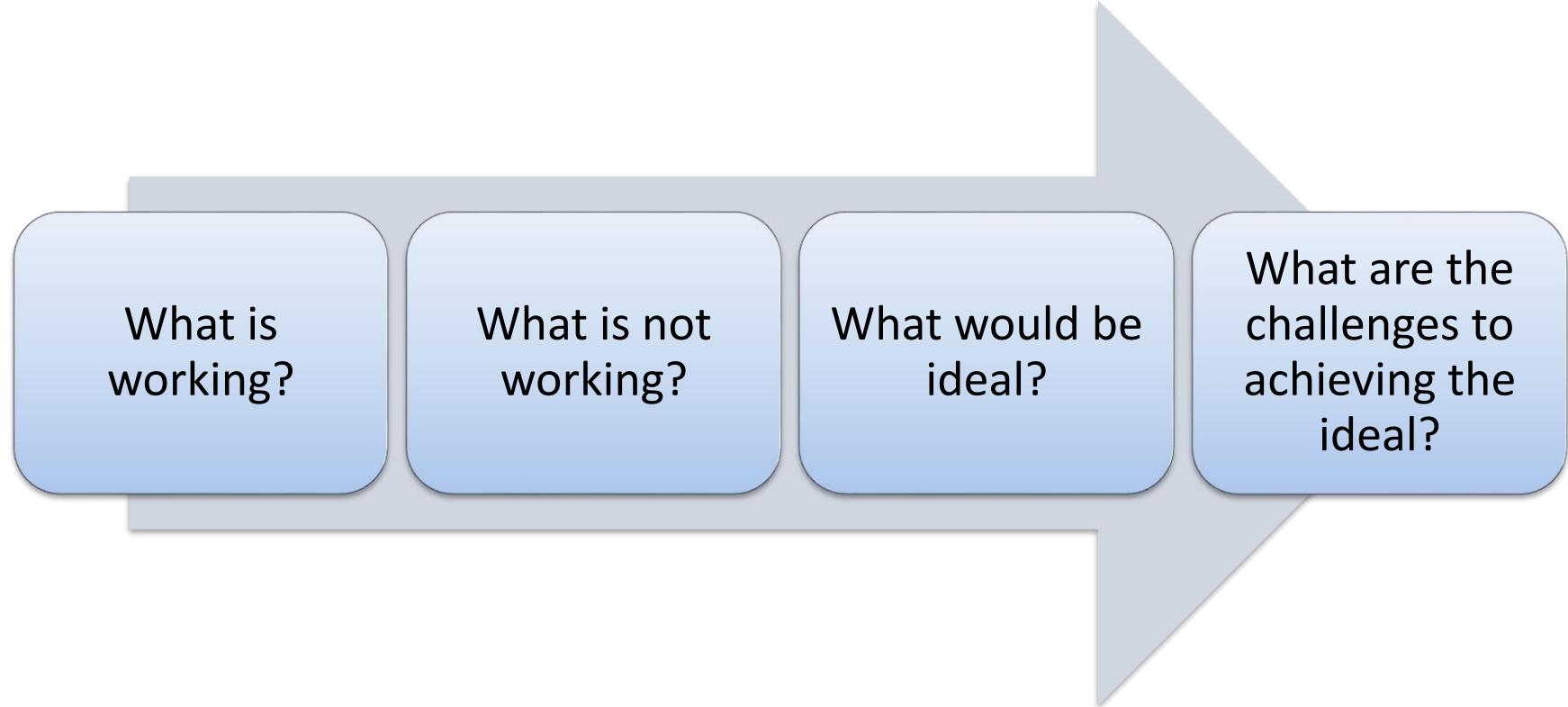
- **Focus on what you can solve.** Some issues are outside of teacher and school administrator control. Focus instead on where your school community can have success.
- **Solutions can be complex and long term.** Many conditions took years and different faculties to create them. Similarly, it will take time and effort to reform conditions. They will likely not get resolved in a one-and-done training.

Quick Ways to Use Teaching Conditions Data

- Include one probing question at the beginning of faculty meetings.
- Have school leaders invite thoughts on a specific teaching condition through a weekly e-mail.
- Put a teaching conditions mailbox in the mail room.
- Include 5 minutes of discussion at grade-level and team-level meetings.
- Create a SurveyMonkey survey with one or two targeted questions about a condition that the school is focused on.
- Other ways?

Process for Analyzing a Specific Teaching Condition

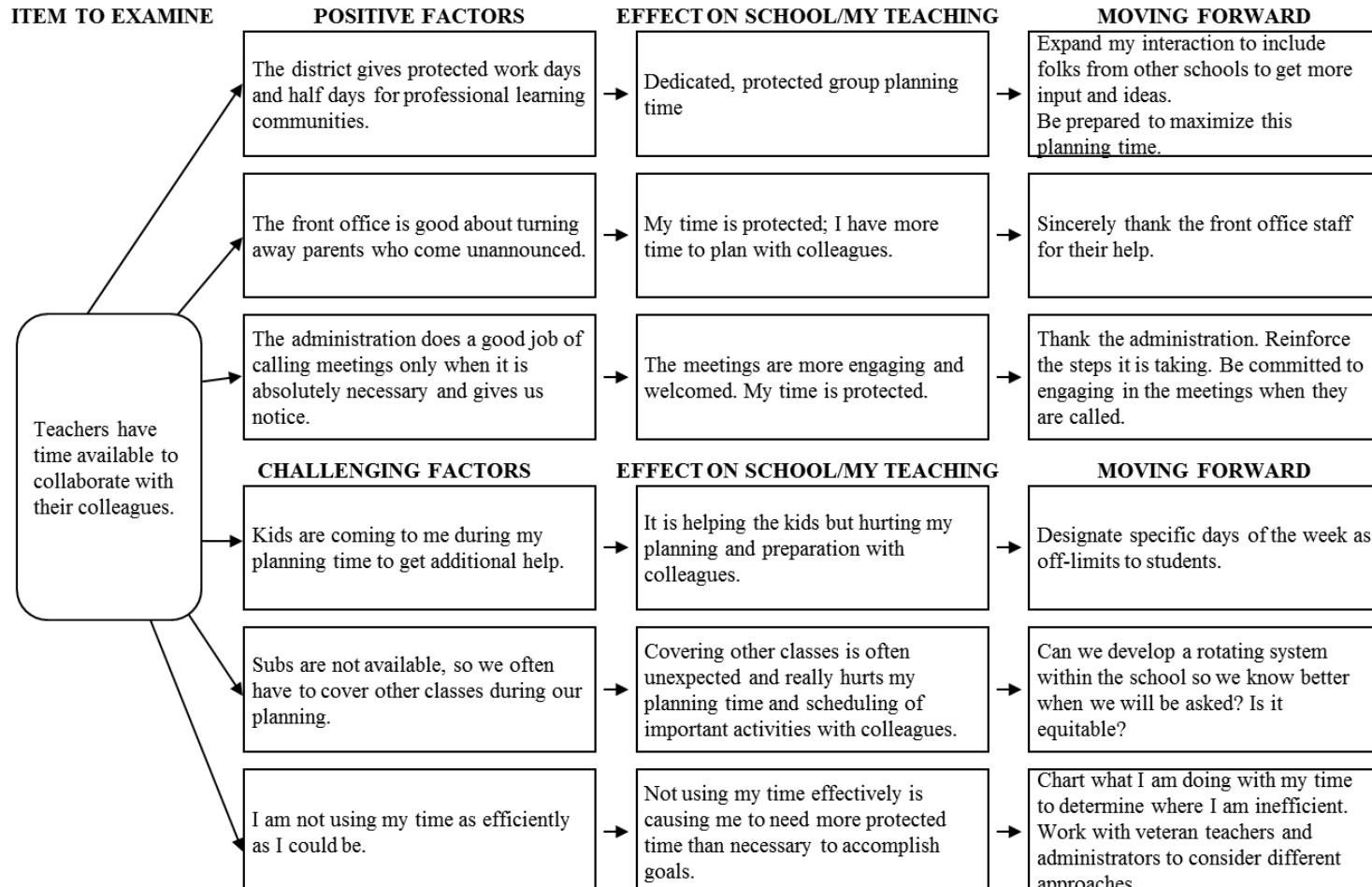
Process for Analyzing a Specific Teaching Condition (Micro-Level Analysis)



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 and Is Not Working?

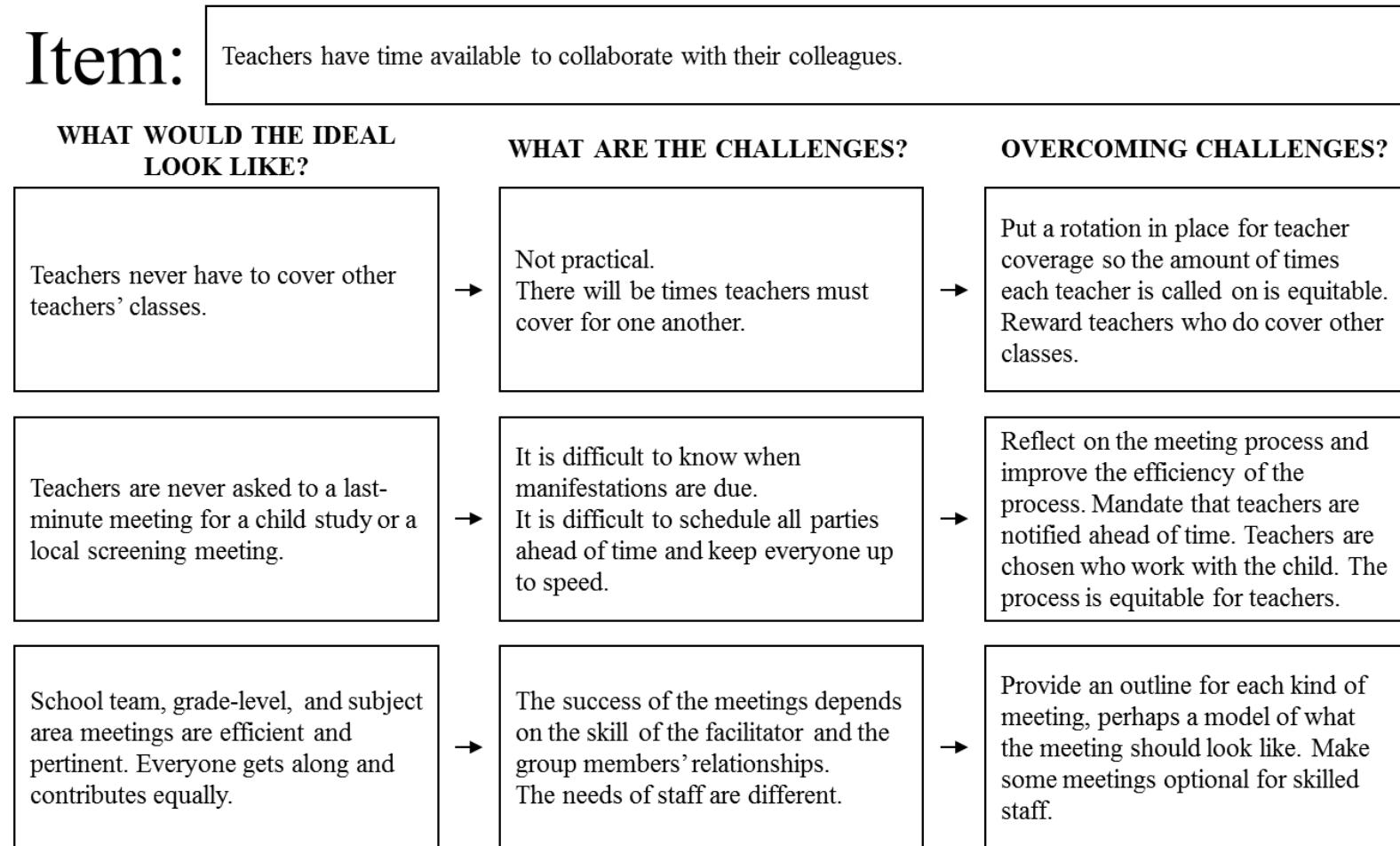


Handout 7a

What Is Ideal? What Are the Challenges?

Item:

Teachers have time available to collaborate with their colleagues.



Handout 7b

Activity: Guided Discussion With Graphic Organizers

- Discuss with your partner the following questions:
 - What might be some next steps the leadership could take to begin to operationalize some of its faculty's thinking?
 - What obstacles do you see as potential challenges to this implementation?
 - In what ways can you empower other individuals within the school to take on leadership roles in some of this work?
 - How will you evaluate the effect of your efforts along the way to monitor progress, give feedback, and make adjustments?

Micro Level 2: Individual Item Prompts

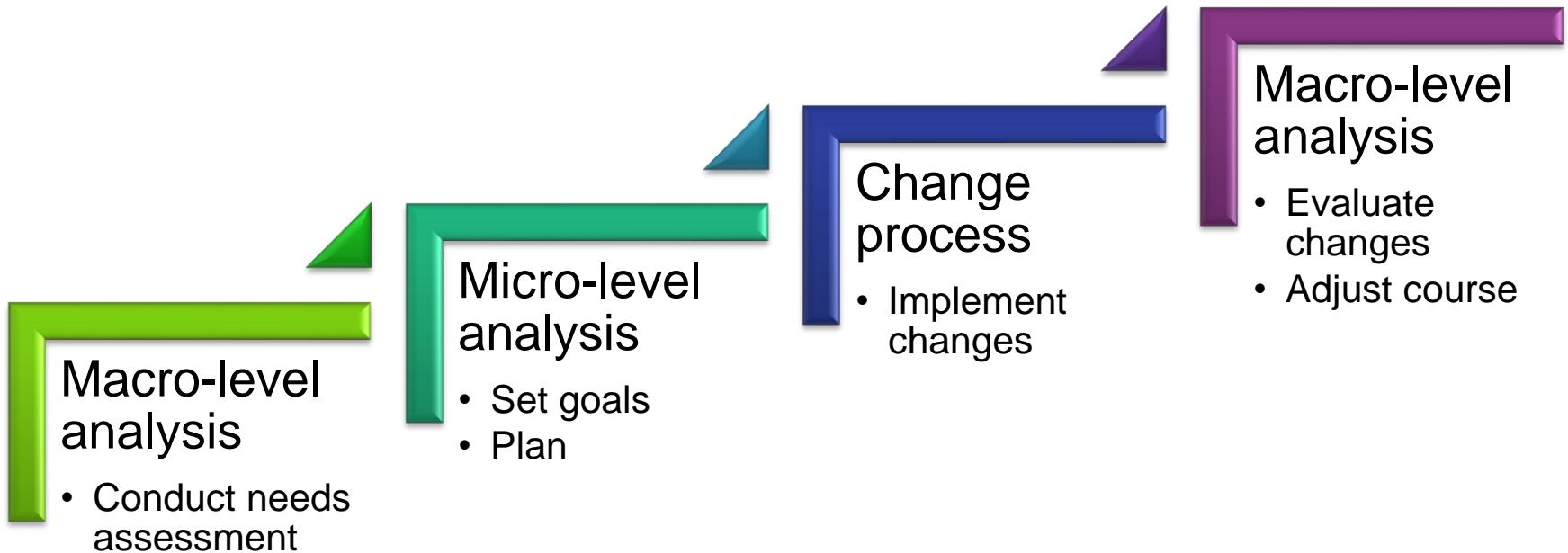
- Prompts are used to guide reflective, collaborative conversations about specific school conditions.
- There is a series of reflective prompts for nearly every question in the survey; prompts are available online at <http://teachingconditions.org/individual-item-prompts>.
- Prompts are not the only questions to ask, but they do provide a starting point for dialogue.

Sample Prompt: School Leadership

- What systems are in place at your school to encourage and support the discussion of teacher issues and concerns?
 - How are teacher leaders incorporated in these systems?
 - Is time set aside to allow for these conversations?
 - Are all the leadership staff providing consistent support of these systems?
 - How do you know?
 - How are new teachers supported in this area?

[http://teachingconditions.org/individual-item-prompts.](http://teachingconditions.org/individual-item-prompts)

Data Collection Cycle of Continuous Improvement



How to Use Teaching Conditions Data

- Include data as one of multiple measures in school improvement planning.
- Use data in a formative and not summative manner.
- Establish collaborative norms for engaging staff in discussions about findings.

How to Use Teaching Conditions Data

- Engage as many educators as possible in decision making.
- Provide critical feedback to schools.
- Leverage best practices from schools that exhibit positive teaching conditions.
- Support schools that need improvement in the development of change management skills and provide frequent follow-up.

Love It or List It

- Having seen the four different ways you can collect teaching conditions data:
 - Where might you be able to apply one or more of these methods in your work?
 - How might output from one of these methods enhance your work?

Handout 8: Love It or List It Action Planning

How Are Teaching and Learning Conditions Data Used Across the Country?

How Districts Are Using Teaching Conditions Data

- Targeting professional development and resource allocation
- Determining individual school needs from systemwide needs to maximize resource allocation
- Adjusting beginning teacher supports
- Incorporating data into one of multiple measures for superintendent, principal, or teacher evaluation
- Sharing best practices across the district

How Schools Are Using Teaching Conditions Data

- Using data as one of multiple measures in school improvement planning and goal setting
 - Engaging in collaborative conversations about what is working and how to address challenges
- Using results as a starting point for discussing challenging conditions

Action Steps

- Where might teaching conditions data logically fit as an additional measure to include with other initiatives and obligations your school, district, and state are requiring already?
- What steps can you take with your school(s) to begin exploring their teaching conditions?
- Use Handout 9 to help you think about some of the next action steps that you could take and the timeline to complete those action steps.

Next Steps and Closing

Team Time

Suggested Outcomes

Using Handout 9 or a preferred template, teams will:

1. Plan concrete next steps to identify existing survey or create a district and/or school-specific teacher working conditions survey
2. Create action timeline for administration, collection of results, analysis, communication, prioritizing conditions, action, micro-data collection, analysis, and action
3. Identify roles and responsibilities
4. Administer district and/or school-specific teacher working conditions survey

Team Time

Suggested Outcomes

5. Analyze data, communicate results to teachers, staff, and other stakeholders as appropriate
6. Identify teacher working conditions priorities and communicate next steps for immediate actions and next step in process: micro-data collection and change implementation
7. Continue action planning and data collection and analysis, using iterative cycle, to prioritize challenges and implement changes



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Welcome and User Agreement

Welcome to the TELL Resource Website. We hope you will find useful articles, case studies and research to help improve the teaching and learning conditions at your school. In order to get maximum benefit from this site, we hope you will join our community. [Read more](#)

Your Feedback and Thank You!

- Please complete the evaluation, and leave it on your table.
- Thank you for participating in today's session!
- For more information and/or assistance:
Melissa Irby: mirby@air.org/804-229-9943

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