New Tech Network

New Tech Network: **Articulating a Problem of Practice (PoP)**

Summary

- A problem of practice is something the school cares about, feels stuck on, and wants to understand more deeply. It is an area that focuses on supporting student learning outcomes, is observable and actionable, connects to something your NTN school *really* cares about, and is high-leverage (i.e. if you can make movement here, it will push other areas).

Why Does it Matter?

- Student outcomes and adult learning improve due to intentionality. Focusing on a targeted PoP will help you zero in on specifics and develop a plan.
- It is grounded in evidence. This can help you gain clarity around what you are trying to improve and which steps could be taken. This can also support your school improvement plan/goals.
- Identifying the PoP as a school leadership team, with shared ownership from staff, results in data and improvement that interests the whole staff.
- An adult learning practice is connected to a real student challenge that you have. If we can identify the challenge in student learning, we can better support the teacher practices that help students acquire desired skills for college and career success.

What a PoP isn't, and what it is...

Not a Problem of Practice	Optimally Identified Problem of Practice
- States an administrative or operational issue - Controlled by someone besides the building staff - Addresses an isolated *immediate* issue that is not connected to bigger school/district goals. - Focused on what teachers are "doing wrong" or blame of students - Is subjective (not observable or grounded in data) Ex's: - Attendance is low - There's no dean of students	- Based on (qualitative and quantitative) data - Can serve as umbrella for teaching & learning strategies in school plan - Targeted around student learning (especially in relationship to NTN learning outcomes) to drive shifts in adult practice - Can be controlled by the staff - Is observable - What you REALLY care about as a school, for your students. - Connected to ongoing improvement work. - Can be related to an already established school goal Ex's: - Teachers indicate that their post-unit feedback reports students struggling to connect with others in their groups because many teammates are not there on a regular/consistent basis. Students are unable to build trust among classmates/small teams and carry out responsibilities of group identified roles. - Students can identify the task(s) they are working on in class

Projects aren't awesome	and/or the title/theme/scenario of projects that may be present, but do not see the connection to daily tasks within the project.

Selected out of Thin Air <---> Connected to Ongoing
or by an individual staff member   improvement work & based on data

Checklist: **Articulating Your Problem of Practice**

Questions to ask as you articulate your NTN's student learning challenge	✔
Describe the issue/stuck point/ what is problematic: • When thinking about the goal you're working towards right now, what's the student learning challenge/dilemma that you are most concerned about? • How is this challenge directly related to the larger learning outcomes on which your school is focused? • What might staff need to know/be able to do to effectively address this issue?	
Brief generalization about data that led to selection of this issue: • What's making you feel "stuck"? • What's the evidence that you are stuck?	
Unpack structures needed for adult learning: • How do the current staff learning supports address this issue? • What teacher supports would need to be in place?	
Describe goals and outcomes: • Who do we want our students to be in the classroom? (talking to one another, thinking through problem solutions, etc.) • If we address this problem, we hope to see growth in the following student outcomes and their ways of being: _____	
Identify additional focus questions: • What other questions do you want/need to pay attention to as you navigate this problem of practice?	

Our Problem of Practice/Notes