National School Reform Faculty

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Data Driven Dialogue

Developed by the Teacher Development Group, 2002.

"Dialogue comes from the Greek word dialogos. Logos means 'the word,' or in our case we would think of the 'meaning of the word.' And dia means 'through' – it doesn't mean two. A dialogue can be among any number of people, not just two. Even one person can have a sense of dialogue within himself, if the spirit of dialog is present. The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which will emerge some new understanding. It's something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all. It's something creative. And this *shared meaning* is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together." (Bohm, D., 1990)

This protocol was originally written in the 1990s/2000s. We encourage you to purchase an NSRF membership to access newer materials and to enroll in CFG Coaches' Training to access all of the updated materials and to develop a more thorough, experiential understanding. Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrfharmony.org.

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Data Driven Dialogue Summary

Based on work presented by Nancy Love, author of "Using Data/Getting Results", (2002).

This protocol builds awareness and understanding of the participant's viewpoints, beliefs, and assumptions about data while suspending judgments. All participants have equal voice. The three phases of data-driven dialogue assist groups in making shared meaning of data. We encourage you to use this tool with your entire school staff and/or with your school leadership team at a special meeting on data. The dialogue tool helps to replace hunches and feelings with data-based facts, examine patterns and trends of performance indicators, and generate "root-cause" discussions that move from identifying symptoms to possible causes of student performance. In order to effectively use this tool, participants will need to have PSSA grade level, school, or district data reports.

- **Phase I Predictions**
  Surfacing perspectives, beliefs, assumptions, predictions, possibilities, questions, and expectations

- **Phase II Observations**
  Analyzing the data for patterns, trends, surprises, and new questions that "jump" out

- **Phase III Inferences**
  Generating hypotheses, inferring, explaining, and drawing conclusions. Defining new actions and interactions and the data needed to guide their implementation. Building ownership for decisions

A similar version of the Data Driven Dialogue can be found online at:
www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/UseofSECDataDianaN.pdf

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Data Driven Dialogue Predictions

Phase I Predictions dialogue takes place before you see the data. During this time, you activate prior knowledge, surface assumptions, and make predictions, thus creating readiness to examine and discuss the data. You hear and honor all assumptions and ideas as "building blocks for new learning."

Private Think Time

Before beginning your Phase I Predictions dialogue, please reflect privately and record several of your preliminary thoughts about the data. One or more of the following thought-starters may be helpful.

- I assume…
- I predict…
- I wonder…
- My questions/expectations are influenced by…
- Some possibilities for learning that this data may present…

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Data Driven Dialogue Observations

During Phase II Observations dialogue, you engage with the actual data and note only the facts that you can observe in the data. Conjectures, explanations, conclusions, and inferences are off-limits. You make statements about quantities (e.g., Over half the students…), the presence of certain specific information and/or numerical relationships between ideas (e.g., Over 90% of the students achieved below standard in Problem Solving; Compared to last year's data, the percentage of students performing at the advanced and on-standard levels in Skills increased by 8%…)

Private Think Time
Before beginning Phase II Observations dialogue, please study the data privately and record several of your observations.

Remember:
Just the facts! If you catch yourself using…, then stop.

- I observe that…

- Some patterns/trends that I notice…

- I can count…

- I'm surprised that I see…

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Data Driven Dialogue Inferences

During Phase III Inferences dialogue, you (a) generate multiple explanations for your Phase II Observations; (b) identify additional data that may be needed to confirm/contradict your explanations; (c) propose solutions/responses; and (d) identify data needed to monitor implementation of your solutions/responses.

Private Think Time

Before beginning Phase III Inferences dialogue with your colleagues, please reflect privately, using one or more of the following thought starters to prompt your thinking:

- I believe the data suggests… because…

- Additional data that would help me verify/confirm my explanations is…

- I think the following are appropriate solutions/responses that address the needs implied in the data…

- Additional data that would help guide implementation of the solutions/responses and determine if they are working…

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