Every Minute Counts
(The Time Thief)

This tool helps collaborative teams to 'steal' time and proactively design approaches to meet the needs of all of the diverse learners in their classes.

PLC 2.0 Stage: Learning/Action

Prep time: 2 mins to photocopy protocol

Time for Activity: 55-60 minutes

Use this protocol to have your collaborative team:
- assess and reimagine classroom routines as well as their approaches to priority standards to maximize time on learning.
- proactively design differentiated approaches to meet the needs of students who are below, meeting and exceeding expectations on a priority standard
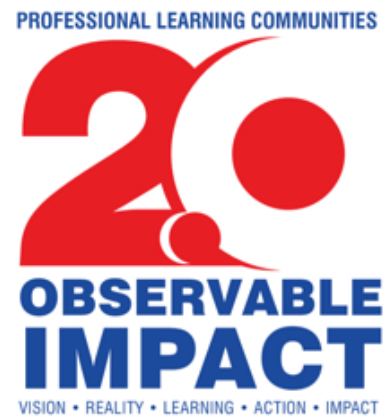
Things You Will Need:
- copies of Every Minute Counts for each team member
- chart paper, post-it notes and markers (optional)
- unit outlines for the priority standards scheduled to be taught over the upcoming weeks

Part 1

Creating the Vision (5 minutes)

1. The Team Leader welcomes the team to the meeting, and says "Every day in our classes we all know that we are going to be faced with a wide range of student abilities. Today, we are going to be using a tool called 'Every Minute Counts' to help us re-think our approach to our upcoming priority standards to see where we can create "Push/Pull" Time--the time in our classes to PULL our students who are below standard 'up', and to PUSH our students

who are meeting or exceeding standards 'beyond' where they are already."

     a. The Team Leader designates a recorder to fill the protocol, and the team decides the period of time that they are going to be considering, which could be a week, two weeks, or four weeks.

2. The Team Leader says "As we know, carving out time from our already busy days is a challenge, so we need to know that it is going have the impact that we want! Regardless of how much time we are able to carve out of our days, we need to ensure that we have a clear vision of what that time will look like if it were successful. In Section 1, if this "Push/Pull Time" to differentiate for our students were functioning at the highest level for us in our classrooms what would we observe STUDENTS doing and demonstrating and EDUCATORS doing and demonstrating? What are the types of tasks we would see?"

     a. The Team Leader pushes the team to make sure their descriptors are observable

          i. from "The students would be working hard" and "The teachers would be helping the students" to "the students would be starting and completing tasks at their level of learning" and "Teachers would be providing feedback that moves the students forward."

     b. At the end of the five minutes, the team prioritizes 2-3 observables for each of students, educators, and tasks and these are recorded on the protocol.

Part 2

Time Thief - Part 1 - 'Stealing' from Our Classroom Routines (10 minutes)

1. The Team Leader asks the team to brainstorm all of the routines that they typically have to do in their classes, and to approximate how much time they take - taking attendance, giving instructions for tasks, clean up and others.
2. Once this is done, the Team Leader says to the group "If meeting the needs of all of our learners is important, we need to look at how we can do some things differently, starting with our classroom routines. Let's brainstorm our daily routines and how much time each of them takes during a typical class." The team brainstorms, and then contemplates new approaches:

       i. What are routines/tasks that we might do differently?

      ii. What are the routines/tasks that we might get others to do?

     iii. What are the routines/tasks that we might be able to do less frequently?

     iv. What are the routines/tasks that we might be able to eliminate altogether?

3. The team then shares ways they can modify or eliminate any of their

management routines--the Team Leader encourages new thinking "How many of us have given instructions, only to have a number of students ask questions about those very instructions just seconds later? What could we change?"

 a. The Team Leader presses the group with the idea that even if one or two changes are made, every minute counts.

4. The recovered time is put in the Push/Pull Time Recovered Box for Part 1.

Part 3

Time Thief - Part 2 - 'Stealing' from Our Approach to Priority Standards (25 minutes)

1. The Team Leader asks the team to list the upcoming priority standards that they are going to be covering in their classes, the typical tasks and assessments they would have their students do and time those tasks would take.

2. The Team Leader then asks the team to assess their tasks using the following question: "Which of our tasks are most impactful in allowing us to observe what each of our students knows about that standard?"

 a. The Team Leader emphasizes the importance of thinking differently--"If we want to find time, we need to think outside of the box!"

  i. Rather than taking notes, could we create learning stations and have students do peer teaching of certain topics?

  ii. Instead of a 30 minute video, is there a 5 minute video and a "Save the Last Word" discussion protocol that we might use instead?

 b. The Team Leader also cautions the group not to simply eliminate the 'fun' assignments to create more time for 'rote learning'. "The measure for the impact of the task should not be 'fun', it should be whether it allows us to know what students know!"

3. The team looks at their tasks to determine whether they are high, medium or low impact, and then decides on alternative approaches that maintain rigor but maximize time for observable learning. Any recovered time is aggregated and placed in the Push/Pull Time Recovered Box for Part 2.

Part 4

Making the Most of Push/Pull Time (10 minutes)

1. The Team Leader says "Finding time is hard work! We have created a vision for Push/Pull Time and we've re-examined the way we approach our class

and our outcomes. Now it's time to do some pre-planning for how we are going to use this time. Let's consider each of the priority outcomes and activities from the 'conversation starters' at the top of Page 2 to see how we might plan in advance to meet the needs of each of our learners."

    a. Priority Standards are listed in the left margin, and the team looks at the conversation starters to inspire ideas for how they can best use their Push/Pull Time

        i. "I am going to set up learning stations for my students who are approaching and above standard while I do individual interviews with my students who are below standard. Then I can determine what those students know while the other students are still engaging with the content."

        ii. "I am going to have my students who are above standard do some peer tutoring with those students who are below standard in this section so I can push those students who are just about there a bit harder."

        iii. OPTIONAL: while not required, team members may choose to begin to form student groups at this point in the "Students To Consider" section.

Part 5

Commitment to Impact (5 minutes)

1. The Team Leader says "As we know with the Observable Impact Model, we want to ensure that this Push/Pull Time is having the impact that we hope. So we need to develop our "If we...then we will observe…" statement before we implement this time so we can reflect on its impact on these standards after using the time to meet the needs of all our learners."

2. The team then contemplates what they will see students doing and demonstrating as a result of the Push/Pull Time in these priority standard areas.

    a. Example: "If we use this 50 minutes of Push/Pull Time per week over the next four weeks, then we will see

        ■ STUDENTS:

            1. Our students who are at or above standard able to give specific feedback and assistance to other members of the class at a higher frequency

            2. Our number of students who are below standard reduced to zero

            3. An increase in the number of students who are at or above standard

- EDUCATORS:
  1. Developing peer feedback strategies with the class to build the capacity of students to help other students
  2. Utilizing the differentiation approaches designed by our team at a higher frequency"

3. This statement is recorded, along with a scheduled date and time to re-visit the Push/Pull approaches for these priority standards.
4. The Team Leader thanks the team for their time, and a copy of the protocol is added to the Evidence Wall.