

LEARNING FORWARD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

# Professional Learning to Promote Teacher and Student Agency

## A Teacher-Led, Video-Based Model

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Dallas, Texas*

# AGENDA

## Professional Learning to Promote Teacher and Student Agency: A teacher-led, video-based model

Learning Forward • Dallas, TX • December 2, 2018

9:00 - 10:00	Formative Assessment and Learner Agency
10:00 - 11:00	Professional Learning Constructs for Video Study
11:00 - 12:00	Self-Assessment in Video Study Groups
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00	Learning Culture
2:00 - 3:00	Peer-Feedback in Video Study Groups
3:00 - 4:00	Planning for Video Study Evaluation

### Session Outcomes listed in our proposal:

- ✓ Learn a range of strategies to integrate video to deepen collaborative dialogue and improve instructional practice
- ✓ Explore approaches to engage students and student voice in professional learning
- ✓ Develop and get feedback on how to apply and/or scale video-based, teacher-led learning
- ✓ Understand the construct of “mirroring”, or how to backwards-map professional learning designs that mirror the learning strategies we want teachers to use with students.

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN SAIL PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



## Continuous Improvement Cycles

Continuous improvement rests on three primary characteristics: it is an ongoing process that takes place over time, it is woven into the fabric of daily work, and it addresses specific problems of practice which, if improved, would improve the outcomes of the entire system (Park et al., 2013). The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Cycle represents four phases of a continuous improvement cycle. When taken together, these four phases support ongoing cycles of learning, implementing, and reflecting on changes in practice. Having multiple opportunities to learn, practice, apply, and get feedback is essential to transform practice.



## Collaborative Inquiry Process

In collaborative inquiry, peers provide targeted, specific feedback based on the presenting teacher's Learning Goals and focus questions. Collaborative inquiry rests on a shared responsibility for improving student outcomes and requires the use of shared expertise and experience in order to improve learning practices. Dialogue protocols deepen collaborative inquiry by offering a license for listening deeply and creating new dialogue norms that slow the pace, create time for reflection, open the door for challenge, and allow all voices in the room to be heard and honored.



## Video Observations

The use of videos in collaborative inquiry support teachers to gain a clear picture of current reality, which creates a baseline for setting goals and measuring growth. Video is one of the easiest ways to see instruction as it is happening, and provides new information about how students are learning. The use of video is shown to accelerate the collaborative inquiry process to become more student-focused and goal-driven. The use of video-based collaborative inquiry is relatively new, though anecdotal evidence indicates that it supports teachers to deepen reflective practice, challenge the status quo, evaluate progress towards goals, and monitor improvement over time.



## Teacher Agency

One characteristic of effective professional learning is that the teacher learning experience mirror the student learning experience (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). When learning formative assessment, teachers benefit from establishing an adult learning culture in which they are safe to take risks, identifying their current learning status, selecting appropriate next steps in their learning, reflecting on their progress with peers, and using that evidence to take next steps in learning. The conditions for developing student agency are the same as those for developing adult agency.



## Learning from Students

The better teachers know their students, the more likely it is that they can teach them effectively in a way that they will learn. This involves understanding students as learners and as individuals. It also involves understanding how students experience learning and how students are responding to new classroom practices. Creating a partnership with a few students is one way for teachers to better understand how their new practices are improving student outcomes.

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### Works Cited

Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Park, S., Hironaka, S., Carver, P., & Nordstrum, L. (2013). *Continuous improvement in education*. Stanford, CA: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Retrieved from [http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/sites/default/files/carnegie-foundation\\_continuousimprovement\\_2013.05.pdf](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/sites/default/files/carnegie-foundation_continuousimprovement_2013.05.pdf)

# Learning within the Video Study Group

## A Collaborative Inquiry Model

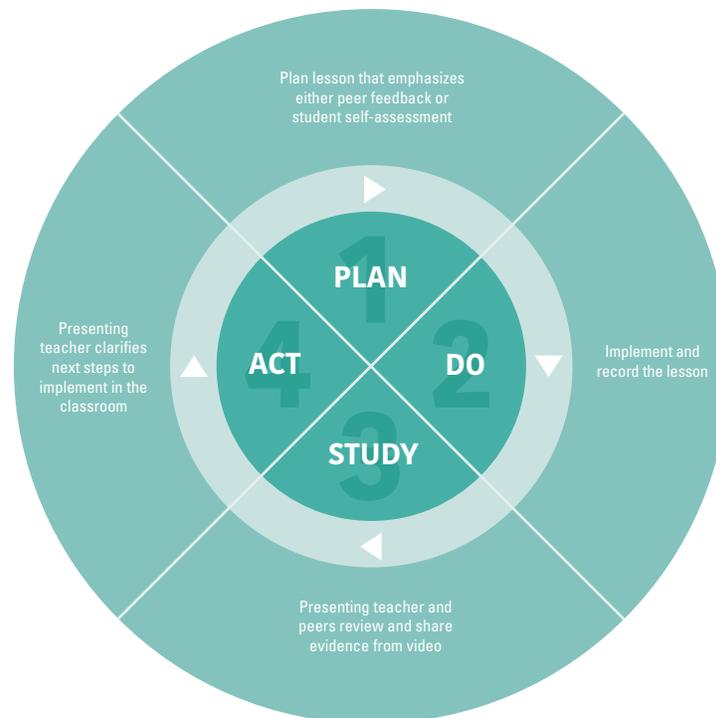
This project is a partnership among the WestEd team, teachers, and school leaders. Building on the knowledge and skills you have developed in formative assessment through the *Formative Assessment Insights (FAI)* Course, our primary goal is to learn together about what it takes to be on the leading edge of practice with respect to student agency in learning and assessment. As teacher researchers in this project, what you learn during this project will contribute to our collective understanding about how to develop instructional practices that support student agency.

The SAAL Video Study Groups are designed to promote collaborative learning by teachers with their peers. Teachers' involvement in collaborative discussions is predictive of positive changes to teachers' individual instruction (Parise & Spillane, 2010; van Es, 2012). The Video Study Group (VSG) design provides teachers with the time and structures to reflect on practice, gather feedback aligned to the dimensions of student agency, and give feedback that helps teachers explore next steps and identify actions they can pursue immediately in their classrooms.

## The Video Study Group Process – Using the Plan, Do, Study, Act Cycle

The VSG process invites teachers to engage fully in their own professional learning through the use of a learning framework known as the PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) Cycle. The PDSA Cycle represents a series of four phases. When taken together, these four phases support continuous planning, implementing, and reflecting on learning.

Beginning with the Plan phase, teachers identify a focus for their learning, establish Success Criteria that clarify what they will be able to do as a result of this new learning, and plan a lesson to capture that learning on video. In the Do phase, the teacher implements the learning in the classroom. To complete the Study phase, teachers review the videotape of their lesson to reflect on their implementation of the new learning, first independently, and then with peers in the VSG environment. After review by self and peers, each teacher outlines action steps during the Act phase to integrate the new learning and identify next steps to further develop and fully integrate the new practice. The cycle begins again to support ongoing learning and improvement.



## Using Video to Deepen Collaborative Dialogue

In the SAAL Video Study Groups, teachers self-select which video clips to share and post for group review. Teachers also provide specific guidance to peers about where to focus their observation. In this way, the presenting teacher has a role in framing the focus of inquiry and observation by peers.

Peer video review has been shown to provide a deeper opportunity for analysis of teaching. First, video allows teachers to see how all students are responding to learning. Also, as teaching happens quickly, video allows teachers to observe what might not be seen in real time. Having a video clip for review means that you can watch it, reflect on it, go back to it, and study it in a way that is supportive and can guide learning – not just of the presenting teacher, but of the other collaborating teachers as well. This allows for more targeted, specific feedback to the presenting teacher and examination of shared learning among peers.

## Using Continua to Guide Evidence Collection and Next Steps

The SAAL continua are tools to deepen teachers' understanding of the key dimensions of peer feedback and self-assessment. The continua support teachers to share and discuss evidence that is aligned with key dimensions of practice as defined in the rows of each continuum. In addition, the columns of the continua help define how classroom practice in a particular dimension of the continuum develops over time. In this way, the continua can be used as an entry point for dialogue as teachers explore next steps for their own learning.

The continua used to guide VSG work are not rating scales. There are no representative numbers on the columns. Rather, the descriptions are provided in each row to guide self-reflection, feedback, and to help support shared inquiry about what next steps teachers might take to move their own practice forward.

## Using Protocols to Advance Inquiry and Dialogue

Protocols support in-depth, insightful conversations about teaching and learning. Their structure permits a certain kind of dialogue to take shape that is atypical of how people generally engage in discussion. Protocols structure dialogue in specific ways to encourage reflection, thinking, and action. They also contribute to meaningful analysis, efficient communication, and learning. Protocols not only create a safe space for listening, but they also offer a *license for listening* since the protocols define when people can respond. They allow for all voices in the room to be heard and honored, and they offer a safe environment in which to explore new, and in particular, challenging ideas.

Teachers new to protocol use often ask why these tools are necessary, particularly if one feels that a group is doing just fine as is. There are three specific practices in most protocols that can be challenging to follow in the beginning. First, protocols are usually timed. This is both to focus the dialogue and to limit off-topic comments. Second, in many protocols, there are restrictions to when presenting teachers and peer reviewers can speak. And third, in review protocols, the presenting teacher is asked not to speak while the group is reviewing their work. Protocols are designed to build the skills—and culture—necessary to sustain collaborative work. In time they will begin to feel more natural as they become part of the VSG meeting norms.

## Documenting Progress

During the project, teachers will be asked to consider how the VSG model and the specific tools are supporting their learning. We will also be interested to hear from you about what changes in practice you have made to support student agency. As you use the elements of the VSG model—use of the PDSA cycle, continua, video, and peer feedback protocols—consider and discuss how this work supports your learning, and what can be done to enhance teacher learning in this model.

## References

- van Es, E. A. (2012). Examining the development of a teacher learning community: The case of a video club. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(2), 182-192.
- Parise, L. M., & Spillane, J. P. (2010). Teacher learning and instructional change: How formal and on-the-job learning opportunities predict change in elementary school teachers' practice. *The Elementary School Journal, 110*(3), 323-346.

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

This project is focused on giving students the capabilities to learn for themselves. These capabilities are more important than ever for school success, and also to succeed in the dynamic and unpredictable future in the world of work. This project overview outlines SAAL's approach to professional learning so that all educators can, as Barry Zimmerman describes in the quote above, view learning as an activity that students do for themselves.

## STUDENT AGENCY

**Advancing student agency in learning and assessment is the core goal of this project.** We will be building on what teacher participants have already learned through the *Formative Assessments Insights (FAI)* course by exploring the competencies that contribute to students becoming active agents in their own learning and assessment. This includes:

- setting personal learning goals;
- actively monitoring learning and generating personal feedback that they act on (self-feedback loops);
- communicating feedback to peers effectively (peer-feedback loops); and
- using feedback from their teacher and peers to make decisions about their own learning.

And we will focus on the classroom conditions that enable student agency.

Self-efficacy—students' self-perceptions of the capabilities they have—is a key factor in student agency, and self-efficacy beliefs are foundational to motivation, so we will be exploring this construct in the project as well.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR TEACHERS

To achieve the goal of advancing student agency in their classrooms, teachers will engage in two, eight-week digital learning modules that focus on a specific dimension of student agency. In each module, teachers will participate in Video Study Groups (VSG) in teams of four, which involves capturing classroom video and providing feedback to each other. Teachers will be given a rubric on each dimension of student agency to support reflection, feedback, and planning. This professional learning model uses an inquiry cycle whereby teachers explore new content, implement new instructional practices, and receive feedback from peers designed to highlight next steps in teacher learning. The specifics of the eight-week module structure are shown below. The overall project timeline appears at the bottom of the next page.

Learning is viewed as an activity that students do for themselves in a proactive way rather than as a covert event that happens to them in reaction to teaching.

- Zimmerman, 2002, p. 65<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory into practice*, 41(2), p.64-70.

# SAIL 8-WEEK MODULE STRUCTURE



## New Content & Processing

Each module will begin with a 2-week Foundation Experience to provide an introduction to a specific construct of student agency with video examples, short readings, and team meeting.



## Plan, Teach & Capture Video

At the beginning of a VSG Cycle, two designated teachers will plan a lesson, teach, and capture video of classroom practice. A 10-minute clip will be selected.



## Reflect & Share

The presenting teachers select and prepare a clip to share with their team. They reflect on the clip, making connections to the rubric, and provide lesson context and guidance to peers about how to focus their feedback.



## Give & Receive Feedback

Teachers will provide asynchronous feedback on the two shared clips through the video platform.



## Team Meeting

Each Foundation and each VSG Cycle concludes with a 90-minute face-to-face team meeting to either plan or discuss the two shared clips and consider ways each teacher can further develop his/her practice in the chosen area of student agency.



## Teams of 4 Teachers

After the 2-week Foundation Experience, teachers 1 and 2 will plan, teach, and capture a video clip in Cycle 1 and teachers 3 and 4 will provide feedback. In Cycle 2, the roles will be flipped and teachers 3 and 4 will plan, teach, and capture a video clip. Over the course of an 8-week module, each teacher will share one video clip and provide peer feedback on three clips.

## PLANNING YOUR TIME

We estimate each 8-week module will require a total of 16 hours of time. After the Foundation Experience (5 hours), teachers will experience 2 VSG Cycles. Teachers will spend approximately 11 hours across the 2 Cycles as explained below:

### A teacher who is planning & videoing classroom practice

#### 8 HOURS

1st Week: 2 hours individual planning  
2nd Week: 3 hours selecting a 10-minute clip, reflecting, & sharing  
3rd Week: 3 hours reading feedback, watching one video, providing feedback & participating in a team meeting

### A teacher who is reviewing video clips & providing feedback

#### 3 HOURS

1st Week: N/A  
2nd Week: N/A  
3rd Week: 3 hours watching 2 videos, providing feedback, & participating in a team meeting

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR LEADERS

We know from experience, and also from our evaluation data of *FAI*, that support from leaders is essential for teachers who are developing new practices. For this reason, leaders will participate in a summer institute focused on deepening their understanding of student agency and how to provide ongoing support to teachers, including effective feedback. At the summer institute, leaders will also develop an implementation plan that includes personalized learning for teachers to support their work to enable student agency. These plans will involve:

- scheduling time for VSG meetings
- clarifying coaching and teacher leadership roles
- identifying technical support to support teacher filming of classroom practice
- defining how this work is to be shared within the school and district
- identifying alignment of this project to other school initiatives

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING FOR COACHES

In order to effectively support teachers as they learn to apply key principles of student agency, coaches will need to be familiar with the module content, be able to reflect with teachers about their practice (particularly as aligned with the course rubrics), and, most importantly, provide feedback that will advance teacher learning.

Coaches and lead teachers who will be supporting VSG implementation are invited to the summer institute to learn about the digital course design, explore strategies to support teacher learning through feedback, and develop a building plan with their principals and district leaders. To support coaches throughout the year, the project team will host calls with coaches to advise on the specifics of upcoming modules, assist them with aspects of planning, and answer any procedural questions. In addition, there will be a digital forum to share ideas and progress and to reflect with peers.

# SAIL Continua: Peer-Feedback and Self-Assessment

## Collaborative Inquiry

The SAAL project is a partnership among the WestEd team, teachers, and school leaders. Building on the knowledge and skills you have developed in formative assessment through the Formative Assessment Insights (FAI) Course, our primary goal is to learn together about what it takes to be on the leading edge of practice with respect to student agency in learning and assessment. During FAI, you touched on student agency in Module 5, but now we want to push on the edge of your practice. While we will provide tools and support for you, we want to explore with you the factors and the conditions that enable your students to become increasingly active agents in their own learning. To engage in this inquiry, we will want to reflect with you along the way, listen to your insights, and record your thoughts.

The insights we gain through this project will not only be important for us, but also for a wider community that is anxious to learn from what we do and what we discover.

## Student Agency in Learning and Assessment

A primary goal in formative assessment is to promote students' agency in their learning. Being active agents in learning and assessment is important for students' self-regulation abilities. Self-regulated learners:

- set academic and personal goals;
- make plans to accomplish the goals;
- monitor their learning processes; and
- self-direct their actions to achieve the goals.<sup>1</sup>

Research is clear that students learn best when they self-regulate. And self-regulation is an important life-long skill to support success in both college and the work place.

During this project we focus specifically on two constructs associated with student agency and students' self-regulation abilities: self-assessment and peer feedback. We have developed two continua for this project to help you gauge where your students are with their understanding and skills in self-assessment and peer feedback. Using these continua will provide guidance for you and others in your team to analyze current practice and to plan for next steps during your Video Study Groups.

## Continuum I: Peer Feedback

In peer feedback, the focus is on interactive sharing of information between peers about how learning is progressing. Peers provide feedback related to Success Criteria that is intended to help one another reflect on their own learning and determine next steps for themselves. In this way, peer feedback assists students to engage in a cyclical process of determining next steps (goals), planning how they will reach those goals, monitoring implementation of their plan, and receiving feedback about progress.

## Supporting Students to Give Peer Feedback

The dimensions of the continuum primarily address student behaviors so that you can identify where your students are and make plans to move them to another level of the continuum. However, students' ability to provide feedback to peers needs to be developed over time through teacher modeling, explicit teaching, and reflection. Teachers also need to put clear structures in place in the classroom to enable peer feedback. These structures range from how the classroom environment is organized for peer interaction, to time allotted to give, receive, and use feedback, and to the teachers' role in deepening interactions between and among students as they are engaged in the peer feedback process. For this reason, some dimensions focus on how you, the teacher, support peer feedback.

## Organization

**Rows.** The rows of the continuum represent a series of four “pictures of practice.” They build on each other to give a sense of how a particular dimension of peer feedback develops from beginning to more sophisticated applications. The continuum provides you and your team not only a shared vocabulary with which to observe and reflect on practice, but also a road map of what to expect as each student develops his/her skills.

You will use the continuum to answer the same three big questions you saw in the Feedback Loop of the *FAI* course.

- *Where am I now?*  
Which picture of practice most accurately depicts what is currently going on in my classroom?
- *Where am I going?*  
What will the next picture of practice look like as it plays out in my classroom?
- *Where to next?*  
What concrete steps can I take to begin to move my classroom towards the next picture of practice?

Row 1 (shaded in green) reflects a teacher dimension of peer feedback, and Rows 2, 3, and 4 of the continuum reflect the student dimensions. Each of the rows in the continuum is equally important, and one dimension should not privilege any other.

The continuum is organized as a table. Reading from left to right, it describes a novice or incomplete implementation of peer feedback to a more expert level of implementation. The continuum includes four dimensions that address distinct aspects of peer feedback: *structured occasions to provide peer feedback*, *the quality of peer feedback with respect to Learning Goals and Success Criteria*, *the quality of student feedback in offering learning support*, and *the structured occasions for students to use their peers’ feedback*. The dimensions related to structured occasions refers to the provisions made by the teacher to support peer feedback, and the dimensions related to the quality of peer feedback address the nature of the feedback that peers provide to each other.

**Columns.** The columns represent the four levels of implementation for the continuum and capture how student peer feedback skills and teacher support from them evolve.

The following diagram shows how to read the four stages of the continuum.



### Professional Judgment

When using the continuum to reflect on your students’ skills and abilities with peer feedback and the context that you provide, the evidence may not match exactly to the description of one level but rather cut across two. In such instances, use professional judgment to select the level that is most representative of the observed practice.

### Classroom Culture

While this continuum does not include specific dimensions related to classroom culture as we discussed in the *FAI* course, this is a critical element for effective formative assessment implementation. The collaborative structures you provide for students, the expectation you establish for students listening carefully and respectfully to each other, and the model that you offer in your own feedback to students will all contribute to the quality of peer feedback in your classroom. In this way, there is a very strong relationship between classroom culture and effective implementation of peer feedback. During the SAAL modules, we will provide an opportunity for you to check-in with the elements of classroom culture using a survey tool, similar to the one used in the *FAI* course. Questions that arise about classroom culture may be part of your Video Study Group discussion.

### Dimension Descriptors

Before you use the continuum, it will be important to familiarize yourself with the different dimensions. The performance descriptors below provide information about the terms used in the continuum’s dimensions. Also, be sure you have completed Module 1, including the activity on scoring the video example provided with the continuum.

**Row 1. Structured Occasions:** The term “Structured Occasions” refers to the opportunities built into the lesson for students to reflect on the learning of their peers and to provide and use peer feedback. A *limited structured occasion*, for example, might be a simple direction for students to write a sentence about their peer’s learning, in a brief space of time, and provide it to their peer without discussion. A powerful structure would involve a more complex activity in which students review peers’ work in depth and are provided with sufficient time to offer extended feedback and engage in a discussion with each other about it.

**Row 2. References and support for the Learning Goals and Success Criteria:** The goal of peer feedback is for peers to assist each other in thinking about where they are with respect to the Learning Goals and Success Criteria and ways in which they can move forward. In the beginning levels, students might reference the goals in their feedback, but the actual feedback they provide does not help their peers think about what they might do to progress in their learning and meet the Success Criterion/Criteria. When students are more accomplished at providing peer feedback, they reference the goals and criteria specifically, and are able to provide a rationale for why the feedback will support further learning toward meeting the goal.

**Row 3. Feedback engages the peer's thinking:** Feedback from peers should ideally engage students' thinking, helping them to understand where or how they have been successful in their learning and to think about next steps for moving forward. The feedback should not be evaluative (i.e., giving a grade or a score or providing an evaluative comment), nor should the feedback specify a next step, for instance, by telling the peer exactly what to do, which may be the case as students are in the early stages of learning how to give feedback. This kind of feedback "*does all the thinking for the peer.*" When students are developing skills in providing peer feedback, they are able to prompt their peer's thinking by identifying areas to work on and/or providing a suggestion for their peer to consider. At the highest level of quality, students engage in discussions with each other about the feedback and think together about next steps in learning that the peer receiving the feedback could take.

**Row 4. Applying Feedback:** The purpose of giving students opportunities for peer feedback is so that they can use the feedback to advance their learning and/or improve their work. In addition to developing skills in giving peer feedback, students also need to know how to apply the feedback in their learning. At the beginning stages, students may not know how to apply the feedback, or they may just indicate that they either agree or disagree with it. When students are better able to use feedback, they consider the feedback and make a decision about whether to use it or not in relation to a specific piece of work. When students set a goal for next steps and make a plan to achieve the goal or to guide future learning, their self-regulatory skills are at an "extending" level.

## Peer Feedback Continuum

	<i>Beginning</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Progressing</i>	<i>Extending</i>
<b>Structured Occasions</b>	Limited structured occasions to support students providing and using feedback.	Adequate structured occasions to support students providing OR using feedback.	Adequate structured occasions to support students providing AND using feedback.	Powerful structured occasions to support students providing and using feedback.
<b>Attention to Learning Goals and Success Criteria</b>	Student feedback makes some reference to the Learning Goal and/or Success Criteria but does not support the Learning Goal and/or reflect the Success Criteria.	Student feedback references the Learning Goal and Success Criteria but minimally supports the Learning Goal and the Success Criteria.	Student feedback clearly references and supports the Learning Goal and reflects the Success Criteria.	Students can justify the feedback they provide to peers (e.g., what evidence in your learning and/or work related to the Goals and Criteria; "I used to give you this feedback..."; and "why I think this feedback will strengthen and/or improve your learning and/or work").
<b>Engaging Thinking</b>	Student feedback is evaluative (i.e., summative in nature – a grade, an evaluative comment). ----- OR ----- Student feedback does all the thinking for the peer (e.g., provides the solution or gives a specific direction to follow).	Student feedback does most of the thinking for the peer (e.g., provides a strong hint about the solution or prescribes a means for improvement). ----- OR ----- Student feedback partially scaffolds a next step for the peer to take (e.g., an area to work on).	Student feedback scaffolds an appropriate next step for the peer to take (e.g., an area to work on, followed by a suggestion or a cue).	Students giving and receiving feedback engage in productive, reciprocal discussion about their descriptive feedback (e.g., asking clarifying questions, discussing how peer feedback relates to peer's own work, discussing suggestions for improvement/next steps).
<b>Applying Feedback</b>	Students agree or disagree with the evaluative feedback, without advancing thinking and/or improving work products. ----- OR ----- Students apply or do not apply the feedback as directed, without engaging in any thinking about their work.	Students consider the feedback and make a decision about how to use the feedback (or not) to the specific piece of work without setting a goal for their next steps or broader learning.	Students use the feedback to focus on an area for improvement or a means to advance thinking and set a goal for next steps or broader learning.	Students apply the feedback with the purpose of advancing their thinking and/or improving their work products by setting a clear goal(s) for next steps in their current learning and making a plan to meet the goal or to direct future learning.

The shaded row focuses on teacher actions and the non-shaded rows focus on the students.

## Continuum II: Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is a process by which students monitor their thinking and behavior while they are learning and identify strategies that they can employ to move their learning forward (McMillan & Hearn, 2008). Self-monitoring is a feature of self-regulation and is a necessary skill for self-assessment (Schunk, 2004). When students are monitoring how their learning is progressing as it occurs against specific performance criteria, they are able to make judgments about how well they are moving forward. This involves students in metacognitive thinking, bringing their learning to a conscious level. When students perceive a discrepancy between where they are and where they need to be, they can take corrective action. Monitoring learning, making judgments about progress, and taking corrective action when necessary is what self-assessment entails. Self-assessment is also essential to using feedback appropriately (Black & Wiliam, 1989; Sadler, 1989).

### Supporting Students to Engage in Self-Assessment

The dimensions of the continuum primarily address student behaviors so that you can identify where your students are and make plans to move them to another level of the continuum. However, students' ability to engage in self-assessment needs to be developed over time through teacher think-alouds related to Success Criteria and structured protocols to support metacognitive thinking, and of course, building in time for self-assessment during lessons. For this reason, dimensions of teacher practice are also included to help you gauge where you are in supporting self-assessment and what you might do next to advance students' skills. Because student self-assessment can also provide teachers with information to act on, this dimension is also included. The amount of structure and support students will need for self-assessment will vary according to students' age and experience.

### Organization

**Rows.** The rows of the continuum represent a series of four "pictures of practice." They build on each other to give a sense of how a particular dimension of self-assessment develops from beginning to more sophisticated applications. The continuum provides you and your team not only a shared vocabulary with which to observe and reflect on practice, but also a road map of what to expect as each students develop their skills.

You will use the continuum to answer the same three big questions you saw in the Feedback Loop of the *FAI* course.

- *Where am I now?*  
Which picture of practice most accurately depicts what is currently going on in my classroom?
- *Where am I going?*  
What will the next picture of practice look like as it plays out in my classroom?
- *Where to next?*  
What concrete steps can I take to begin to move my classroom towards the next picture of practice?

Rows 1 and 4 (shaded in green) reflect teacher dimensions of self-assessment, and Rows 2 and 3 of the continuum reflect the student dimensions. Each of the rows in the continuum is equally important, and one dimension should not privilege any other.

The continuum is organized as a table. Reading from left to right, it describes a novice or incomplete implementation of self-assessment to a more expert level of implementation. The continuum includes four dimensions that address distinct aspects of self-assessment: *structures to support self-assessment, the depth of self-assessment, and students' attitude to self-assessment and the quality of information generated.*

**Columns.** The columns represent the four levels of implementation for the continuum and capture how student peer feedback skills and teacher support from them evolve:

The following diagram shows how to read the four stages of the continuum.



### Professional Judgment

When using the continuum to reflect on your students’ skills and abilities with self-assessment and the context that you provide, the evidence may not match exactly to the description of one level but rather cut across two. In such instances, use professional judgment to select the level that is most representative of the observed practice.

### Classroom Culture

While this continuum does not include specific dimensions related to classroom culture as we discussed in the *FAI* course, this is a critical element for effective formative assessment implementation. The collaborative structures you provide for students, the expectation you establish for students listening carefully and respectfully to each other, and the model that you offer in your own feedback to students will all contribute to the quality of peer feedback in your classroom. In this way, there is a very strong relationship between classroom culture and effective implementation of self-assessment. During the SAAL modules, we will provide an opportunity for you to check-in with the elements of classroom culture using a survey tool, similar to the one used in the *FAI* course. Observations related to classroom culture may be part of your Video Study Group discussion.

### Dimension Descriptors

Before you use the continuum, it will be important to familiarize yourself with the different dimensions. The performance descriptors below provide information about the terms used in the continuum’s dimensions. Also, be sure you have completed Module 2, including the activity on scoring the video example provided with the continuum.

**Row 1. Structured Occasions:** This row refers to the time, structures, and support that teachers provide for self-assessment. *A limited opportunity*, for example, might be when the teacher asks students to check their own quiz, whereas a *powerful opportunity* would be when the teacher provides a tool for self-assessment and engages in conversation with student about her self-assessment, discussing her judgment about pre-requisite knowledge, her current learning status, and what she intends to do next.

**Row 2. References the Learning Goal and Success Criteria:** The goal of self-assessment is for students to monitor their own learning with respect to the Learning Goal and Success Criteria and make judgments about their pre-requisite and current learning and ways in which they can move forward. In the beginning stage, students might not specifically reference pre-requisite learning or the current Learning Goals and Success Criteria and will remain at the stage of evaluating their learning without taking corrective action. For example, at a beginning level a teacher might ask students to provide thumbs up or thumbs down related to what they thought about their learning. An advance on this practice would be to use thumbs up or thumbs down as a springboard for a discussion on the reasons for the students' evaluation. When students are more accomplished at self-assessment, they reference the Learning Goal and Success Criteria specifically, and are able to plan and justify their next steps based on their own evaluation without teacher prompting.

**Row 3. Student Attitude:** This dimension addresses whether self- assessment is meaningful for the students. In other words, do they understand and value its purpose? The degree to which students seriously engage in the task will be reflected in the quality of the information generated. Gauging how seriously students take self-assessment can be observed while they engage in the opportunity, but a further way could be to talk to the student about the process.

**Row 4. Information for Teacher:** When students value the process, the possibility of useful information for both teacher and student being generated is increased. In contrast, when students do not meaningfully engage in self-assessment, it is likely that the teacher will have little or no information to inform next instructional steps.

## Self-Assessment Continuum

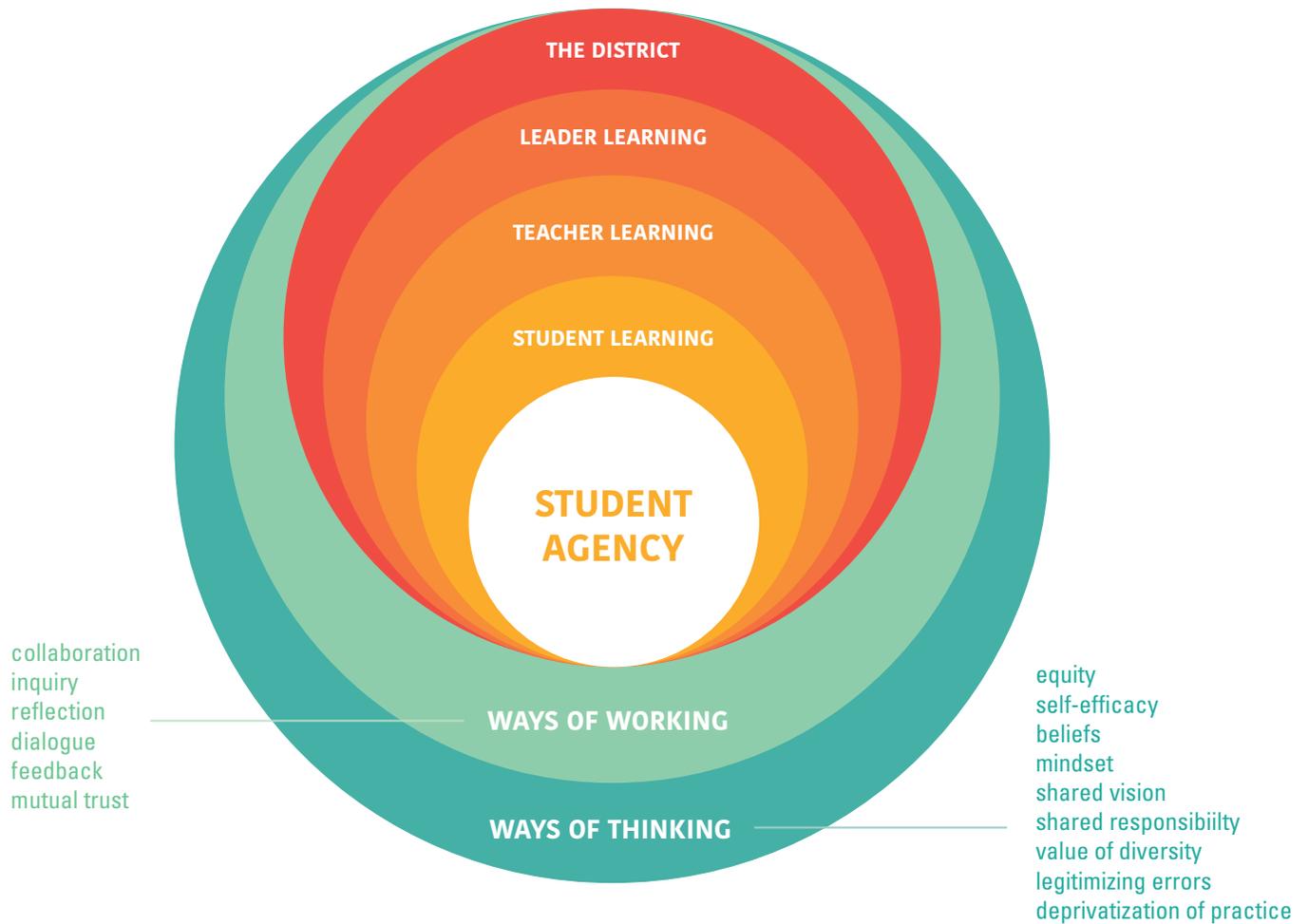
	<i>Beginning</i>	<i>Developing</i>	<i>Progressing</i>	<i>Extending</i>
<b>Structured Occasions</b>	Limited opportunity or lack of structure to support self-assessment. The focus is on superficial/trivial tasks and/or correctness or accuracy. There is little or no support for metacognitive thinking.	Adequate structures to support self-assessment, providing students with some support for metacognitive thinking (i.e., do I have the pre-requisite knowledge/understanding/skills to undertake this learning, where am I now, what do I need to do next to move forward?).	Adequate structures to support self-assessment, providing students with support for metacognitive thinking (i.e., do I have the pre-requisite knowledge/understanding/skills to undertake this learning, where am I now, what do I need to do next to move forward?).	Powerful opportunities provided for self-assessment that clearly engage students in metacognitive thinking (i.e., I have the pre-requisite knowledge/understanding/skills to undertake this learning, I recognize how far I have moved forward from the pre-requisites, I am clear what I need to do next to advance my learning and can take action).
<b>Attention to Learning Goals and Success Criteria</b>	Students engage in self-assessment at a superficial level (i.e., without reference to pre-requisite learning or current Learning Goal and Success Criteria) and are evaluative in their assessment (i.e., a grade, an evaluative comment).	With support, students reference pre-requisite learning and the current Learning Goal and Success Criteria in their self-assessment process and are able to think about next steps.	Students independently reference the Learning Goal and Success Criteria in self-assessment and are able to set goals for improvement based on their self-assessment <i>either</i> on their own <i>or</i> with teacher or peer support.	Students can justify their self-assessment and can independently set well-developed Goals likely to lead to improvement (e.g., here's the evidence in my learning/work related to the Goals and Criteria that I used to set goals for improving my learning/work).
<b>Student Attitude</b>	Students do not understand the purpose of self-assessment, and they do not take the process seriously; they have difficulty making an honest assessment of their learning/work.	Students have some understanding of the purpose of self-assessment and attempt to make a mostly honest assessment of their learning/work.	Students understand the purpose of self-assessment; they take the opportunities for self-assessment seriously, and are able to make an honest assessment of their learning/work.	Students take the opportunity for self-assessment seriously. They fully engage in, and clearly value, the process, which they regard as important to their own learning.
<b>Information for Teacher</b>	The teacher has little or no information from the student self-assessment to inform next instructional steps.	The teacher has some information from the student self-assessment to inform next instructional steps.	The teacher has sufficient information from the student self-assessment to meaningfully inform next instructional steps.	The teacher has sufficient information from the student self-assessment to encourage the student in taking the next steps in his/her learning.

The shaded rows focus on teacher actions and the non-shaded rows focus on the students.

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# A Culture of Learning to Support Student Agency: Guiding Questions for School Leaders



## What is a learning culture?

A learning culture is a particular philosophical atmosphere in which leader learning, teacher learning, and student learning flourish. In this atmosphere, uncertainty, struggle, and confusion are valued, and they are understood to be generative stimuli for creativity and learning. When a gap between intended and attained outcomes occurs, the response is not disappointment but eagerness to understand what caused the gap.

One of the hallmarks of this culture is that adults and children work within and cultivate a growth mindset: a belief that one's basic qualities—such as personality, intellectual abilities, etc.—are malleable or incremental, not fixed, “carved in stone,” or innate. Holders of a growth mindset believe that their intellectual abilities can be developed through effort and training; they are oriented toward learning goals rather than performance goals, aiming to grow their abilities rather than demonstrate them. Consequently, they view failure as an opportunity to learn rather than as an indication of their lack of ability. At the school level, schools that embrace a growth mindset have teachers who view teaching as an opportunity for continual professional growth and believe that all their students can learn and develop their skills using proper scaffoldings. Likewise, principals who embrace a growth mindset believe organizational learning is collective. Reflective inquiry into practice is a top priority, and it is their mission to facilitate such learning so it becomes a habit within the school.



**ASK YOURSELF:** *At your school, where is the learning culture strongest and what does this look like? Where do you want to strengthen it and what might this look like?*

## How can I foster teacher learning?

Research has shown that the most effective professional development for in-service teachers is situated in their school context and builds on their knowledge and day-to-day classroom challenges. Participants in a school-based professional learning community (SBPLC) collaboratively develop an inquiry stance toward their own practice.

The school structure that supports high-level SBPLC is one in which hierarchy is flattened and leadership is decentralized, allowing every teacher to take an active leadership role, thus enhancing teachers' self-efficacy and collective efficacy, and increasing motivation to invest efforts in improving their practice.

Leaders support teacher learning by structures and routines for evaluation, knowledge management, staff involvement, and professional development.



**ASK YOURSELF:** *At your school, what is one organizational or procedural change that would help to “flatten hierarchy”? How can teachers in the Video Study Groups take an active leadership role to enhance student agency?*

## How can my teachers and I balance a learning culture with accountability demands?

Some worry that accountability demands might undermine a learning culture by putting too much pressure on students, teachers, and leaders, and thus shifting their focus to achievement rather than learning. Research shows us, however, that a learning culture is actually the best defense against this unfortunate shift in focus. In one study, schools with such a culture

experienced no negative effects of high-stakes external assessments, but schools where a “testing culture” prevailed (a focus on improving scores and not using test results to inform instruction, extensive test preparation, and de-prioritization of non-tested subjects) did experience negative effects.

What researchers found is that the learning culture of a school remains strong when accountability demands are complied with, but not allowed to dictate the agenda. School curriculum is aligned to the external requirements but no special arrangements are made to prepare their students for the tests; when the results arrive, they are thoroughly studied and compared with evidence from internal assessments. In essence, the external assessments are swept up into the learning culture and used as one more piece of evidence to inform leader, teacher, and student learning.



**ASK YOURSELF:** *Think of a teacher at your school who is particularly good maintaining a learning culture in the context of external accountability demands. How (specifically) does s/he make it work?*

## What’s the relationship between Formative Assessment and teacher learning?

The way students learn and the way adults learn are very similar, and in highly effective adult learning communities, we see the same elements that we see in Formative Assessment classrooms, including:

- a focus on student learning,
- shared school vision,
- reflective dialogues,
- collaboration,
- shared responsibility coupled with high expectations for the learning of all students in the school,
- professional self-efficacy,
- collective efficacy,
- supportive social climate,
- ‘deprivatizing’ of practice (collaborating, sharing practice, and planning with others),
- learning from errors, and
- common language.

In short, teachers grow their practice through an inquiry cycle that mirrors Formative Assessment and both processes occur through participation, agency, and assessment aimed at improvement.



**ASK YOURSELF:** *Choose one of the characteristics above. What might it look like at the district level? In a coaching session? In a SBPLC? In a classroom?*