CHAPTER 4

PROPOSED DESIGN FOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Planning professional learning for a diverse population, across a district, is not an easy task. It takes much planning and collaborative efforts to propose an effective program. An effective plan must be a flexible structure with clear objectives and goals; all while considering best practices for adult learning.

Phase 1

During this phase, the district administrative team, a sample of school-building leaders, and teachers across the district reviews some critical components related to planning for professional learning. There they can review the phases to contribute ideas and apply critical activities to a calendar across the year. First, we would consider who requires initial training on the Marzano Framework, whether they are new staff, never received training or require re-training based on preference, interest or need. Then we would consider how the district will build capacity so that teachers have opportunities to lead, and coaches can reflect on how they engage teachers in an inquiry process to develop goals, try new strategies and approaches, and evaluate impact on student learning. Finally, there needs to be consideration for the role of leadership, both school-level and district-level in driving improvement. How will leadership facilitate learning? How will they engage their teams so professional learning best practices are in place? How will they follow up? How will they monitor and record progress? How well-versed are they in understanding the Marzano Framework? How will they evaluate, formatively, how professional learning is impacting practices and student achievement so that adjustments can be made?

Training

Direct training on Domain 1 design questions and strategies at the district level should be offered to faculty who have not received previous training or who require intense training. This can be in person or online, since the participants communicated interest in such training through the collected survey. If budget allows, working with the Marzano group directly would be ideal. More surveying is needed to determine the best time to offer training: during the day, during allotted professional learning time, after school, on weekends or over summer break. Direct training would benefit new teachers, teachers who might have received inconsistent or minimal previous training, or teachers whose practices have not shifted even with previous training. This training would be offered to cohorts on an ongoing basis, which gives faculty a chance to network. Training might be most effective should coaches, who can then follow up by bringing the new practices into classrooms, facilitate it.

To evaluate training sessions/workshops and professional learning, district administrators will rotate collecting data on sessions and facilitator performance. This will help gain a deeper understanding of the need facilitators/school leaders/coaches have for performing facilitation duties or if the other concerns regarding remediation (logistics, content, etc.) arise. Appendix F is a general template that could be used to document concerns and highlights from sessions.

Opportunities to Build Capacity

Throughout the professional learning experience, there should be opportunities for lead teachers or teacher leaders to mentor or facilitate activities. Teachers who demonstrate consistent, innovative practices can be scouted and supported by a school leadership team to participate in a variety of ways that increase their learning and benefit others as well. Modelling for others, recording lessons to share with others, hosting visitors and reflecting on performance,

managing a website or shared drive, and facilitating activities are just some of the ways to build

the capacity of teachers and increase their level of participation. In addition, this is a way for

leaders to differentiate support and maximize peer-to-peer learning.

An additional opportunity could include having teachers record themselves teaching in

order to evaluate their practices with specific elements from Domain 1 in mind. This video can

be shared with the coach in person during a postobservation meeting. Another form includes

uploading a video of the teacher's choice onto a shared forum for a cohort to critique and provide

encouragement or support; noting glows (strengths) and grows (thoughts for next steps).

Leadership

One key ingredient, which can make or break effective professional learning, includes

empowering leaders and holding them accountable for being instructional leaders. For success to

be sustainable, leadership must follow up with individuals after an observation or a meeting with

groups. Participants require their understanding and involvement. Leaders need to encourage and

apply reasonable pressure to support growth. Training for leaders on observing and normalizing

evaluation is critical to ensure that observation data for evaluations are objective, valid and

reliable. This training can include district-level meetings, mentorships or leader-to-leader

networking and visits. Leaders are learners, too, and therefore, require feedback on their

performance. Leaders and coaches, mentors and district-level administrators should participate in

meetings to discuss dilemmas and approaches for providing feedback and support, and using data

to address unintended problems of practice. Leaders and coaches should be trained in the use of

questioning techniques. A strategy such as invitational inquiry, presented by Laura Lipton and

Bruce Welcome who authored *Learning Focused Supervision* and *Got Data? Now What*,

describes invitational inquiry as a tool to inviting collaboration that emphasizes a process over a

product. A question stem using this strategy includes an invitation stem such as *how might, what might be some way*, a cognitive stem such as *describe, evaluate, consider*, and a topic stem such as *student engagement, assessment data, curriculum.* Using this strategy means applying a positive presumption that works best when developed in a calm, professional, and friendly tone. Connecting to outside organizations, such as The New Teacher Center, might benefit instructional coaches in that they will learn strategies for supporting both teachers and leaders in a way that invites inquiry, participation, and equitable voice, and provides structure. Coaches are a vital component of professional learning and it is essential that they have a deep understanding of adult learning and a repertoire of coaching strategies to employ during in-classroom coaching. Some strategies could include modelling while the teacher observes, co-teaching along with a teacher, facilitating reflection and plan, observing the teacher and providing feedback, facilitating a learning experience, using ongoing narration and reminders to reinforce application of a new practice.

It is vital that leaders and coaches alike evaluate performance of teachers and provide ongoing feedback. By reviewing data regularly, they can plan to adjust professional learning plans for groups or individuals in a responsive and proactive manner. They should have plans to place to monitor and record support for teachers to ensure that there is a way to link practices, professional learning and student achievement.

Lastly is the discussion of the role of district leaders. In planning this professional learning experience, district leaders should develop formative and summative questionnaires to capture data related to intended and unintended outcomes. Questions types should address participant reactions to their experience by asking about how the participant connects to learning and how conducive the environment was to learning, gauge learning through application of

knowledge and skills in response to scenarios, measure support of school leaders, and evaluation and review of student achievement data for performance and progress over time.

Phase 2

In this phase, professional learning is launched with the goal of having all faculty members in alignment by revisiting or refining the district vision, reflecting on individual strengths and areas for growth, and discussing attitudes and beliefs that support the concept of lifelong learning. Having a vision ensures that we have a plan with the end result in mind. The district-wide vision states:

"The Swedesboro-Woolwich School District is committed to maximizing the academic, social, and creative development of *each child* attending its schools. Our vision is to make sure each child is prepared to compete in a highly competitive global economy. We embrace the philosophy that all children can *learn in a safe, nurturing* environment that encourages children to *accept and find the best in themselves and others.*"

In this phase, a strong, trusting and transparent foundation is established to set the tone for collegiality and professionalism. Faculty will revisit and develop vision, will individually reflect, and community will be created.

Vision Statement

In a district-wide meeting, as an exercise, participants should read the district vision and discuss *key words* and *phrases*. Then they will respond to a series of questions including: (1) How much do I believe in this vision? (2) How is this vision evidenced in my program/classroom? (3) How does this vision connect to Domain 1 of the Marzano Framework? (4) What high quality teaching practices need to be in place to support student achievement, as outlined in the vision?

In school-building group clusters, each of the four schools in the district should develop a vision for their learners. Perhaps the staff at Stratton has a defined vision for student success for the first and second graders, which differs from third-fifth graders at Harker. Using the district vision as a guide, what does each individual school envision for their own community of learners? Is there room to plan for rigorous, developmentally appropriate learning environments?

In grade-level team meetings, groups should again develop a vision for high quality, programmatic learning keeping the language of Marzano in mind. In Pre-K, what would high quality learning look or sound like? What type of environment and interactions do we envision for student engagement? Moreover, what teaching practices need to be in place for this vision to come to fruition?

By studying vision, we are creating a forum for exposing beliefs or biases about the work. By encouraging groups to develop vision, we are providing them with a chance to keep the end result in mind and we can later hold them accountable to these statements. Faculty members should constantly reflect on how their efforts to improve align to and support the vision.

To prepare for this segment, district leaders should meet to review the vision and consider how they will support school-building leaders with using the vision as lens of community achievement. School-building leaders should prepare by understanding how to support a group of teachers to develop a school-wide and grade-level vision. School-building leaders can write proposals of how they will support this work, and then submit them to district leadership for approval or feedback. A plan should be put in place to check that each school's efforts are exemplifying the vision on a quarterly basis.

Individual Reflection

As part of the professional learning process in this phase, each participant should reflect on each of the nine design questions listed in Domain 1. Focusing on the strategies that fall into one domain at a time, faculty will be asked to read the design question in full and then list an area of strength with a cited example, an area of growth with a cited example, a determined area for focus and next steps with additional room for questions to ask his/her leader, coach or cohort. Once the faculty member has reflected on each of the nine design questions, she/he can work with a mentor, coach or leader to review and prioritize areas for growth to determine a focus. Appendix E: *Professional Reflection Form* can be modified, but is a basic template for documenting the above components. This document, when completed for all nine design questions, will add evidentiary context to self-proclaimed areas of strength and growth. Leaders, coaches and mentors should support teachers with completing and using their forms to discuss support and growth. It is recommended that these documents be first completed at the beginning of the professional learning program, again midway and once more toward the end of the program.

When a focus is determined, leadership should assist each teacher they directly supervise with developing a SMART goal. A SMART goal is one that is *specific* in that it states who, what, when and where, is *measurable* in that it refers to quantity that can be measured, is *achievable* in that the goal is one that can be met in a reasonably set time, is *relevant* in that it is meaningful and relates directly to the learning desired, and is *time bound* in that it is clear by when exactly a goal would be met or a new practice put in place.

During individual coaching sessions (which might occur monthly or quarterly), leaders and/or coaches should sit with teachers to complete the document and develop a smart goal. The

smart goal will help focus on areas where coaches can support and where leaders can observe and provide actionable feedback during evaluative visits (both formal and informal).

Create Community

During school-wide meetings or meetings held with teachers and their direct supervisor, have teachers develop an elevator pitch on the importance of lifelong learning and how commitment to learning makes them a strong educator. Provide an article to read such as Carol Dweck's *Growth Mindset* to facilitate the conversation surrounding self-awareness and willingness to learn, change, adapt, and transform. Having open discussion on a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset can be the recurring spirit needed to encourage and pressure faculty members to embrace new ideas, implement new practices, and evaluate the effectiveness of approaches. Leaders or facilitating coaches should be prepared to challenge group by discussing vulnerability.

This approach would serve as the springboard for participating in professional learning. Together, the group can continually revisit the vision, and develop norms for professional collaboration that is productive, including sharing voices where everyone contributes and participates, and for communication that is respectful, nurturing and one that makes everyone feel that they are in a psychologically safe, working environment.

At this juncture, it would be appropriate to evaluate impact through interviews wherein teachers or team discuss how applying a growth mindset will support them with professional learning. Discussion on the differences between previous professional development and future professional learning could be held. Small groups of faculty members can create a "Cherish and Change" board where they can document components of professional learning that they cherish

and components that they would like to change. This keeps the conversation solutions-based and supports the involvement of teachers in development professional learning experiences.

Throughout this phase, the learning objectives for professional learning activities should be made clear. The branches of professional learning should be shared, which includes: interactive trainings both in person and online, team meetings, instructional coaches pushing into the classroom, leadership following up and providing feedback that is individualized and differentiated and aligned to pre-determined focuses. A series of technological resources can be put in place, such as a listserv, a group website with contact information, meeting minutes shared, ideas and suggestion posted as it pertains to Domain 1, shared video library and additional resources or a shared google drive for sharing documents and having collaborative, live conversations.

The overall, discovery approach to this professional learning demonstrates multiple entry points for support to grow in Domain 1 of the Marzano Framework. By designing professional learning with a learner in mind; we value what is already known and acknowledge the breadth of talent amidst our school in order to challenge all teachers to reflect and improve their practices.

Phase 3

In this phase, faculty is challenged to use data to inform practices. Collecting baseline student data and working together to analyze data which demonstrate how implementation of strategies impacts student learning will build the capacity of faculty and support the improvement of practices aligned to Domain 1 of Marzano. Faculty will interact in a variety of ways, both school-wide and district-wide.

Horizontal Support

One structure for meeting, instead of sit-in-trainings, is to develop inquiry groups with norms, clear objectives and roles for participants to increase their level of engagement in the process. By establishing a recurring time for horizontal teams (across one grade) to plan, reflect and problem-solve together, peer-to-peer learning and learning that impact teachers on the same grade level are brought forward.

During this time, members can rotate presenting a problem of practice or dilemma using the Consultancy Protocol, for example. This process is a structure for discussing a dilemma and working efficiently towards its solution, as a group to develop approaches that can be tried. When a teacher shares a dilemma, other teachers might relate to it as something they have experienced as well. For others, it is an opportunity to learn a system for approaching a problem in a strategic manner. The steps for using a protocol, such as the Consultancy Protocol, include having one person write about a dilemma, gather supportive evidence and formulate a question to pose to the group. The dilemma is shared with a group who may or may not be experiencing a similar dilemma. The group asks clarifying questions for them to better understand the dilemma. Then the group asks probing questions for the presenter to challenge their thinking. The group has time for discussion about the dilemma while the presenter listens closely, and at the end of the process, the presenter reflects on the experience and significant ideas that emerged from the process. The entire process can take up to 50 minutes to implement properly.

Horizontal meetings are also a great time to role-play scenarios as they relate to practices from Domain 1. Having grade teams break into smaller groups and assigning roles where one person is the teacher, another a student, and a third person serving as a meta-coach who can remind, support, challenge or consider criteria, helps develop skills and is another form of learning. Role-play is an effective way of trying out practices just as we try on clothes before purchasing. It is good to have participants rotate roles and reflect toward the end of the practice. Some people are uncomfortable with role-play and would prefer to "talk through" a dilemma or scenario, but role-playing challenges them to respond in the moment and all faculty should be encouraged and pressured to embrace this learning opportunity.

In horizontal, grade-level meetings, teams can follow a data cycle to inform practices. With a determined focus in mind, perhaps the group selects design question 1 or design question 4, and begin implementing practices in the classroom. Then, over the course of a week or two, collect low inference notes and high quality work samples which are annotated and demonstrative of student knowledge of skill. Low inference notes can capture student behavior or language, or can capture interactions between a teaching staff member and a student. After data is collected, teams can analyze data against common core standards being addressed, a teaching practice focus, trends, and areas of success and areas of challenge. This data can be used to inform instructional moves or a need for more data collection. While teaching teams collect, analyze and inform, they are actively collaborating, reflecting and even engaging families, where applicable. At the core of this work, we must remember to apply a strengths-based stance so that strengths can be used to leverage areas for continued support.

A protocol for analyzing student work should be in place. It is not enough to simply look and sort the work because that loses validity, gets tangled with bias and might not lead to informed decision-making. The following includes steps to take to analyze student work:

1. Note if the data is representative of a small group, whole class or individual case study;

2. Note the Marzano lesson segment or design question being addressed:

    a. What is the content standard or focus?

    b. What is the task or product that will be used to assess student learning?

3. Note the common core standard being addressed:

    a. What specific knowledge, skills, and/or process will students demonstrate?

    b. What does meeting the standard look like?

4. Sort work by performance levels:

    a. What are the performance levels of the entire class?

    b. Write Students' names in the appropriate area:

        i. Far below: __% of class

        ii. Approaching: __% of class

        iii. Meeting: __% of class

        iv. Exceeding: __% of class

5. Describe the Performance

    a. What are examples and evidence of what students know and are able to do?

        i. Far below performances:

        ii. Approaching performances:

        iii. Meeting performances:

iv. Exceeding performances:

6. Identify the possible misconceptions:

   a. What are students' learning needs?

      i. Far below standard:

      ii. Approaching standard:

      iii. Meeting standard:

      iv. Exceeding standard:

7. Plan how you will differentiate instruction to move students' learning forward.

   a. Far below standard:

   b. Approaching standard:

   c. Meeting standard:

   d. Exceeding standard:

8. Next Steps

   a. What are some of the next steps?

   b. What resources and/or support personnel might support you and your students?

   c. What professional development would support your learning?

Faculty might require support with capturing low inference notes and activities, such as playing a ball game called, "What the Evidence?" could help refine this skill. To play, a small group stands in a circle and each member of the group shares low inference notes to demonstrate proof of a specific design question. The group passes a ball around the circle and the person with the ball shares their proof first before passing to the next person who will share proof. To ensure that the presented data is properly aligned to the design question, the group can ask, "What's the

evidence" until the holder of the ball is able to refine their low inference observation. Then the ball is passed for another person to share. This works when sharing a video and critiquing the observed teacher using low inference notes on what the teacher and students did and said. This activity refines data collection skills, normalizes actionable definitions of a practice, and builds capacity of the participants through active engagement. In addition, it's a fun way to refine observational skills.

A final component to maximizing engagement in the learning process and building capacity of team members includes involving the group in conducting instructional rounds or diagnostic inter-visitations. A group, led by a facilitator, makes rounds to observe, collect data, share observations and make suggestions. Members are more open to critique and actionable feedback as a process for learning and growing.

Vertical Meetings

Another branch of professional learning and a way to network across the district includes meeting in vertical groupings so teachers across grades and content area can meet. With a focus on specific design questions, faculty in these vertical cohorts can develop a scope and sequence for expectations for student performance. The group can determine if expectations are aligned to core standards, consider how the design questions align to the district vision, consider developmentally appropriate stages and ages, and consider exceptional students, such as those with special needs, gifted students or students who are not proficient in the English language. The group can use collected data to support evidence of meeting various levels of the Marzano Framework. Using the analyzing data protocol mentioned in the section on horizontal meetings will prove helpful when meeting in vertical meetings.

It would benefit this group greatly to practice instructional rounds as well, to gain a deeper understand of the practices across grade levels. Faculty will require protocols for giving and receiving feedback. The Critical Friends model suggests techniques for giving effective feedback which includes: be aware of your motive – your only motive should be to be helpful, focus on the behavior, not the person, speak for yourself only, use "I" not "you," restrict your feedback to things you know for certain, focus on descriptions, not judgement, choose an appropriate time and place, focus on recent behavior – don't harp back to the past, feedback should be lean and precise, check if the other person understands the feedback, accepts it and is able to do something with it, and always end feedback with a request for future action. Critical Friends also suggests techniques for receiving effective feedback which includes: place clear boundaries around the feedback, listen carefully to all that is being said, listen beneath the words, ask open questions for clarity, explore gently, acknowledge the feedback, acknowledge the valid points, don't defend yourself, and take time to sort out what you have heard and what you want to do with it, express your thanks.

Leadership would benefit from meeting in vertical teams as well, across school buildings, to collaboratively solve problems using protocols such as The Five Whys or the Fishbone Tool for Root Cause Analysis. If teachers are struggling with implementing a specific element from Domain 1 or implementing it at an innovating level, administrators can follow the root cause analysis process to truly understand why this challenge is taking place. To treat an illness, we must first diagnose the root cause. Collaborating to problem-solve is a great learning strategy. Following a protocol will assist the team with stating causes and not symptoms of a problem. To help leaders connect to this process, discuss or show a video clip from the TV show, *House,*

where the plot of each episode is based on Dr. Gregory House (hospital diagnostician) probing and leading his team to find the causes beyond the symptoms of illnesses.

- Team agrees on problem statement (sometimes known as the effect). This is written in the mouth of the "fish." The statement must be written clearly and specifically without defining the problem or suggesting a solution.

- Team then agrees on significant categories of causes of the problem that is written on the branches (of fish bones).

- Team brainstorms all the possible causes of the problem. Ask, "Why does this happen." Cause is aligned to some of the major causes recorded earlier.

- Team goes deeper to revisit each cause, asking again, "Why does this happen," and adding more branches.

- Team continues to ask "why?" and generates deeper levels of causes and continue organizing them under related categories or causes. This helps to get to the root of the problem.

The district will provide direct trainings related to improving practices with Domain 1 in mind. Focus will be on using data to inform practices.

Plan for Professional Learning

District-level professional learning, that can be held in school buildings and facilitated by coaches or school-building leadership, or district-level leadership needs to be broken down into sessions and presented over the course of the year.
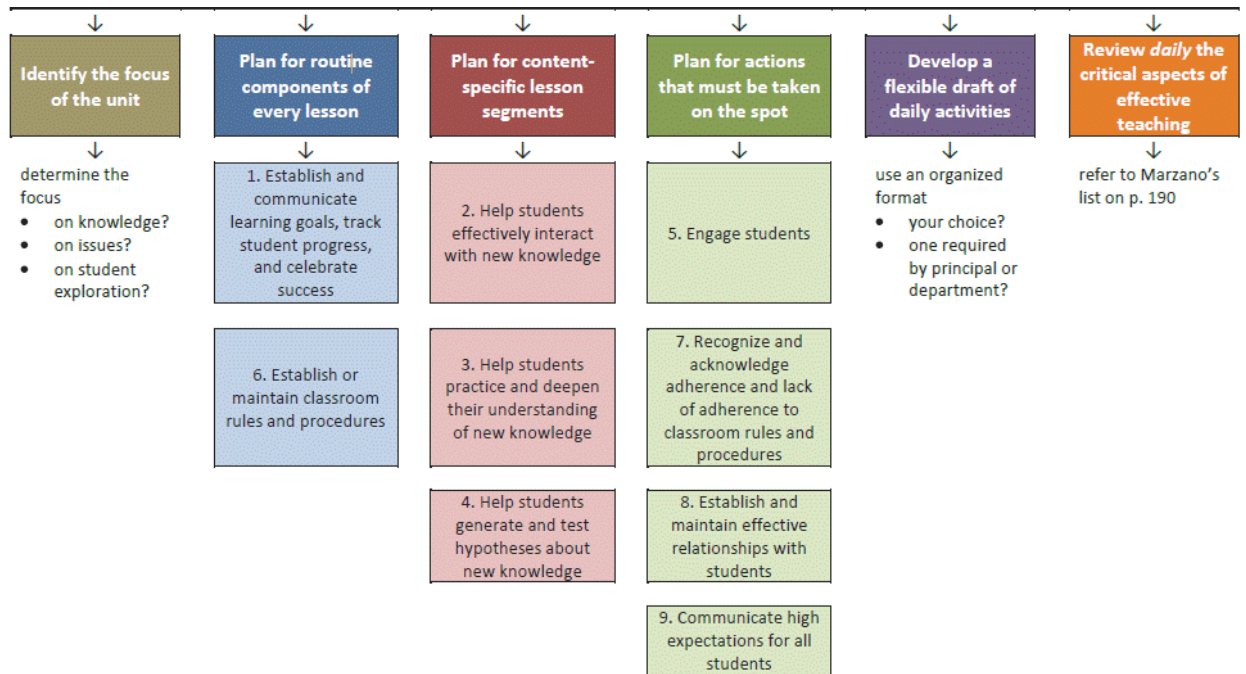
Without prior knowledge of past professional development opportunities SWSD faculty has engaged in, it is a challenge to design professional learning sessions. Sessions must be

designed with flexibility to meet the diverse needs of faculty (novice and experienced, currently implementing at various quality levels and currently not implementing). Based off district knowledge and responses from the survey, it is assumed that each faculty member has previously received training in the instructional model, *The Art and Science of Teaching*.

Session 1: Collecting Data to Inform Future Sessions

This session would follow any work done to conceptualize and evaluate the district vision, and then design a vision for their school or grade level. The objective of this session is to gain a deeper understanding of Domain 1 and to evaluate the extent to which faculty are intentionally planning and implementing strategies for each of the nine design questions.

First off, staff would be grouped by grade, and discuss, "to what extend do we intentionally include these components in our units of study" referring to Table 19, shown below. Faculty would sift through the 9 design question elements and use a Likert scale to rate each component with consideration to planning. The scale would range from 1 (never) to 5 (consistently). Then, after reviewing the extent to which they plan to implement each design question, faculty would have to write three low inference statements that address how they apply each design question and what it looks like in their grade.

Identify the focus of the unit	Plan for routine components of every lesson	Plan for content-specific lesson segments	Plan for actions that must be taken on the spot	Develop a flexible draft of daily activities	Review *daily* the critical aspects of effective teaching
determine the focus • on knowledge? • on issues? • on student exploration?	1. Establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success	2. Help students effectively interact with new knowledge	5. Engage students	use an organized format • your choice? • one required by principal or department?	refer to Marzano's list on p. 190
	6. Establish or maintain classroom rules and procedures	3. Help students practice and deepen their understanding of new knowledge	7. Recognize and acknowledge adherence and lack of adherence to classroom rules and procedures		
		4. Help students generate and test hypotheses about new knowledge	8. Establish and maintain effective relationships with students		
			9. Communicate high expectations for all students		

Next, each grade-level team would have to review the rubric presented by Marzano and individually reflect on the quality to which they implement each strategy within the design question. Groups can discuss common areas for growth and develop an action plan for implementing new practices. Focus will be on answering, "how will I know I have met this goal?" This session should inform future sessions that a team can develop to meet the needs of faculty based on trends across the district. This team should include district leaders, school-building leaders and teachers from across the district while collecting data from all other faculty members willing to participate and from data collected after each professional learning opportunity.

To summarize, a flexible skeleton structure has been presented to incorporate various facets of professional learning, which follows an inquiry or discovery approach to engage participants as active learners and diagnostician practitioners. There is consideration for how all community members will be involved so that we build capacity and assign roles for effective

adult learning. After each professional learning opportunity, there has to be a way to gather data from participants to gauge the benefits of each activity and how they affect their learning. There also has to be ongoing, formative assessment so that leaders can gauge how and if professional learning activities are shifting teaching practices, and further, if this is leading to increase in student achievement. Consideration for the budget should be made so it is clear where spending will be needed and whether additional grants can be written for supplement funding.

Overall, through surveying faculty and incorporating evaluation data, a quest for research on effective professional learning has led to the design of a plan to increase teacher practices across Domain 1 of the Marzano Framework.