Topic-Selection Protocol

This protocol helps a design team select a unit topic for a research lesson to be implemented during a Lesson Study cycle. The protocol will help each member of the design team gain insight into academic content, relationships to the Standards, curriculum alignment, and most importantly student struggles. The goal of the discussion is to select a unit topic that has a strong rationale for developing a unit plan and lesson plans therein, and is supported by every member of the design team.

Part I: Looking for the most needed unit topic (25-30 minutes)

- Each member of the design team brings teaching material to show to the group.
- Step 1: Each member of the design team quietly thinks about what math/science topics she/he is currently interested in. Write them down on index cards; one topic per card. (5 minutes)
- Step 2: Each member thinks about quietly what student struggles that she/he observed about each of the topics. Present their observations card by card. (5 minutes)
- Step 3: The group uses Ohio’s New Learning Standards to study the topics and related ideas. (10 minutes)
- Step 4: Each of the group members expresses their opinion about which of the topics should be the focus of their lesson study. (5 minutes)
- Step 5: The group finds consensus. (5 minutes)

Part II: Finding where your lesson stands in the unit (40 minutes)

- Each member of the design team brings the teaching material to show to the group.
- Step 1: Each member of the design team quietly thinks about the rationale for developing a unit on the chosen topic for a specific grade level and student population. Each member presents her/his thoughts. (5 minutes)
- Step 2: The group finds consensus about grade level. (2 minutes)
- Step 3: Each member quietly thinks about the concepts involved in teaching of the unit including students’ pre-requisite knowledge and goals of the unit. Write them down on index cards, one topic per card. (5 minutes)
- Step 4: Using the index cards, the group constructs a learning hierarchy for achieving the goals of the unit. Discuss horizontal and vertical curriculum connections. (10 minutes)
- Step 5: The group identifies the goals of the research lesson in the flow of the whole unit. (5 minutes)
- Step 6: Using the index cards, the group constructs a learning hierarchy for achieving the goals of the research lesson. Read and discuss the state standards. Discuss horizontal and vertical curriculum connections. (10 minutes)