

**WALO #3: Leading a Protocol with Staff  
3/7/11-Staff Day at HTMMA**

Staff day was approaching and I realized it would be a strategic move to lead a protocol during this day that would be devoted to improving our practice and our school. I was inspired by the take away that the cohort had in doing the Success Analysis Protocol, and I wanted to give it a go with our staff. I asked my Grad School partner in crime, Kyle, if he wanted to collaborate, and that's when all the magic started to happen. My reason for choosing this protocol was in response to so many quick and sudden changes at our school in the past few weeks that was leaving us all uneasy and unsure. It seemed like the perfect time to focus on successes and what was going well. With Intersession starting next week, a time when teachers are excited yet nervous, Kyle came up with the fantastic idea to frame our Success Protocol around Intersession successes past and present! It also worked perfectly that Kyle and I could each facilitate a smaller group discussion around the topic.

**1. What struck you about this experience?**

Strangely, I felt really nervous. I had facilitated before, but I hadn't facilitated a protocol with my own staff ever! I did tuning protocols and consultancies but I had always been a participant. It took me a few deep breaths and an admittance to my mounting sense of anxiety until I could calm down and get a grip that it was all going to be okay. I suppose my anxiety was due to a variety of factors. For instance, I was leading a protocol to a group of colleagues who don't all attend the GSE and who were not used to protocols in a large group setting. Also, I had never seen or facilitated this protocol before, so I had no notions of what to expect or how to make it successful for everyone. I was extremely sensitive as well to the relevance and making it meaningful for everyone involved, so I made myself justify the entire process. For whatever reasons, the whole time I was thinking about doing a success analysis protocol, I couldn't stop thinking of the possible failures I might endure.

As it turned out, the protocol seemed to take on a life of it's own. We generated a really rich discussion around what was working in our Intersession planning and experiences with kids. Everyone in the group took the protocol seriously and honored the protocol by sharing the air, asking great questions, and giving meaningful feedback. I started to feel better as the protocol allayed my fears. Teachers would share comments in the circle around the relevance of the activity, the meaningful take away from each person's share out, and the excitement generated about all of the great ideas we had. It made me feel like it was worth the time to share out these successes and give ourselves a chance to analyze how we felt about them as a group.

**. How has it influenced your thinking about:**

**a. The craft of teaching and working with students?**

Allowing for the conversation and discussion to evolve and organically rise and fall was a really important lesson for me in teaching and working with students. There were many times

that the discussion went over the allotted share out time, but it seemed appropriate to step back and let the last comments roll out and lead to more thinking. It reminds me that the chance to hear the voices and opinions of others is valuable and through this protocol in particular it allows for a good amount of time to share individual thoughts.

### **b. Being a leader and collaborating with colleagues?**

As a leader, I feel more confident that I can lead and engage a group in a protocol and have positive outcomes. Collaborating with colleagues has shown me that we all have wonderful ideas to contribute and through the protocol, I had a chance to hear everyone's perspectives and opinions and have a really focused and guided discussion that seemed to be relevant to all. I loved having the chance to facilitate the same protocol with Kyle, because I couldn't have done it alone with the whole staff, and he contributed really great ideas to get it going and make it feel useful.

### **3. How has it informed the development of your fierce wonderings and/or your Action Research Project?**

It reminds me that I have to find the success in my own research and think positive about relevancy even though it's my number one concern. If I engage others in what I'm doing and have them participate in the conversation, I think it could be great!

### **4. What surprised you? What questions remain? What are some possible next steps?**

Possible next steps, would be for me to find other protocols that might be relevant to our staff. Perhaps it would be helpful to find out from more staff if they like protocols and feel that we should do them more regularly at staff meetings. I still wonder what was at the root of my anxiety in front of my staff. I think I need more practice talking to them as a group.