

# Coherence Protocol Instructions

(This protocol was originally developed by Michele Shannon and is used with permission.)

## Timing

The protocol as described below takes 60 minutes total.

## Purpose

After your team has done the Stoplight Protocol, this protocol allows you to acknowledge the work you are already doing to use data to improve learning and teaching, to create a sense of coherence between that work and the Data Wise Improvement Process, and to help identify a point of entry into the Data Wise Improvement Process.

## Materials

- Five to ten sticky notes per person
- One poster-sized Data Wise Improvement Process arrow for every three to five people. (Arrow can be photocopied or drawn onto large paper or even drawn by hand on a whiteboard or chalkboard.)
- Pens, pencils or markers
- Tape

## Steps

1. **5 MINUTES.** Explain to participants that they will be doing a protocol that will help them acknowledge the work they are already doing to use data to improve learning and teaching and connect that work to the Data Wise Improvement Process. Give each person five to ten sticky notes and tell them to silently write on each note a different structure, practice, or program at the school that supports using data to improve learning and teaching.
2. **5 MINUTES.** If necessary, break into subgroups of three to five people each. Give each group a poster of the Data Wise Improvement Process and have them tape it to a wall. Instruct participants place their sticky notes on the poster near the step of the Data Wise Improvement Process where they feel it belongs.
3. **15 MINUTES.** Give participants time to read through all the sticky notes. Then lead the group in a discussion aimed at reaching consensus about *what is currently happening* at the school. As you go through each of the steps in turn, you can:
  - Condense notes if the same idea is written more than once
  - Ask if there are any structures, practices or programs that need to be added
  - Have the group identify (and resolve through discussion, if possible) any disagreements about the placement of notes
4. **15 MINUTES.** Lead the group in discussion aimed at finding *a point of entry* for the integration of the Data Wise Improvement Process into daily work. To do this, you can ask:
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- What do we notice about this poster? How does it compare to the poster we created in the Stoplight Protocol?
  - At which steps of the Data Wise Improvement process do we already have robust structures, practices, or programs in place? How can we build on our strengths as we integrate the process into our daily work?
  - At which steps are we lacking? Can identify a particular growth area as a point of entry for integrating the Data Wise Improvement Process into our work?
5. **5 MINUTES.** Have individuals independently write a brief “coherence story” that describes how they could see integrating the Data Wise Improvement Process into their work of the school. The story should include:
- The rationale for choosing the Data Wise Improvement Process to guide the work
  - A current practices that are aligned with the Process
  - A suggested point of entry for the launch of the work.
6. **6. 5 MINUTES.** Have individuals share their coherence stories with the group.
7. **7. 15 MINUTES.** Have the group work together to write a single narrative that captures their collective thinking.

### *Tips*

- Sometimes groups have a hard time naming all of the things they do around using data to improve learning and teaching. If they need examples, you offer the following:
  - Structure: common planning time for a particular group of teachers, goal setting templates
  - Practice: weekly quizzes, data walls
  - Program: a reading curriculum with benchmark assessments
- Some groups may be more comfortable finding consensus before placing sticky notes on the poster. Feel free to modify the protocol to meet the needs of your particular group.

