

Collegial Circle Structures RVC Teacher Center

Professional development in the form of a Collegial Circle provides a group of educators with an opportunity to collaborate with a central focus on developing or enhancing their professional practice. The expectation is that this group of learners will post their outcomes/findings as a district resource for all to benefit from.

This meaningful learning process stems from authentic classroom/school experiences. The collaborative construct provides a learning environment that is flexible to the needs of the participants throughout the process as they work towards a common goal.

Listed below are three examples of effective structures commonly used within collegial circles. However, they are not the only effective structure that can be used as there are additional options available to educators who wish to collaborate with their colleagues. If you have an idea for a structure other than what is listed here, please identify that work on the Collegial Circle Proposal Form and include a description of it with your proposal.

Action Research:

This methodology involves a collaborative approach to identifying a problem or issue, developing and implementing a plan of action, collecting and analyzing data and making changes based on the findings to improve the situation or solve the problem. The goal of action research is to use research to bring about meaningful change in real-world situations (ie. the school or classroom setting), and to involve stakeholders in the process (ie. students, teachers, families, administrators). Questions typically fall into one of these broad categories: student outcomes, individual practices, systems/structures, school/classroom environment, or parents/families. The next steps are to develop an action plan, collect and analyze data, and report findings related to the question. As part of the proposal process, groups selecting action research will also be asked to identify the group that could most benefit from their findings. This process can help to build local capacity for problem solving, promote learning and innovation, and generate knowledge that is grounded in practice.

Literature Study:

This structure is a critical evaluation of existing literature or published works related to a particular research topic or question. It involves reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing relevant literature to gain a better understanding of a topic. Participants may even read about conflicting points of view on particular topics which can further enhance the overall experience of learning about a particular idea. Through regular meetings, participants explore the new idea and how it can impact their work with students.

Participants will be expected to implement aspects of the new learning throughout the process and then meet to share and discuss their findings.

**Participants are expected to complete the independent reading on their own time.*

Collegial circle hours should only include the time spent together discussing the learning and/or planning for its implementation.

Strategy Implementation:

Often, a teacher becomes inspired to implement a new strategy or technique he/she has learned about. In many instances, the teacher finds it challenging to implement because he/she is trying to do so alone and without the support of a team. This will often lead to the teacher abandoning the strategy. Collegial circles focusing on strategy implementation are designed to provide a collaborative environment for a group of teachers to implement new ideas together. There is flexibility to this structure as teachers identify their needs and the process they will use for implementing the work. Critical components of a successful strategy implementation plan include establishing a clear focus for the work, identifying the resource(s) to be used in their learning, specifying the necessary steps in implementation, collecting evidence showing the impact of the strategy with students, and reflecting on the impact of the implementation.