Citywide Instructional Expectations Case Study
Guiding Questions

Overview

The 2014-15 Citywide Instructional Expectations help schools reflect upon and refine their practice in order to prepare all students to graduate college and career ready. One strategy for reflecting on practice is to examine how other schools have approached their work. These case studies offer insights on how teachers, school leaders and field support staff make decisions and engage stakeholders to develop school-wide practices to strengthen student achievement.

Case study schools have strong practices in building coherence among their culture, structures, and instructional core. The school communities voluntarily and generously shared their work in order to develop case studies that:

- Reflect authentic practice in a New York City school
- Include resources or artifacts from the school
- Connect to one or more of the 2014-15 Citywide Instructional Expectations components: Knowledge of Students, Instructional Focus, Collaborative Professional Learning

Guiding Questions: Collaborative Professional Learning

From the 2014-15 Citywide Instructional Expectations: As a key element of professional learning, collaboration supports both teacher and student growth. It is the collective responsibility of all school members to engage in professional collaboration that serves the needs of their students. The culture of reflecting on and refining practice to drive the work within schools builds upon previous years' Expectations and New York City's focus on inquiry. Collaborative professional learning between school leaders, staff, families and communities increases the impact of strong instruction. Schools will develop systems and structures that foster collaborative professional learning in support of their instructional foci and identified areas for teacher and student growth

1. What information in this case study suggests how collaborative professional learning is embedded in the life of the school?

2. What decisions did this school leader make to develop structures for collaboration?

3. How is the school's collaborative professional learning based on knowledge of students?

4. What questions does this study raise? What data or evidence would you like to add?

5. After reading the case study, what have you learned about what works that can inform your school's practices around professional collaboration?

6. How will your school develop or refine practices to ensure meaningful and effective professional collaboration?
   a. What is one practice that you and your team already do well that can be built upon in the upcoming school year?
   b. What is one next step you can take to help support this work in your school?

Potential Next Steps: Review activities and resources to support collaboration

- Leadership Library
- National School Reform Faculty

Raising Expectations One School at a Time

Six Case Studies of the Work of New York City Schools in Light of the District's 2012-13 Citywide Instructional Expectations

Autherine Lucy Prep Middle School:
Belonging, Mastery, Independence, Generosity

Written and Researched by:
Alisa Algava
Eskolta, LLC

With Collaborative Researcher/Editor:
Aaron Boyle

July 2013

eskolta
We help schools learn.

Introduction

Autherine Lucy Prep: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, Generosity is one of six case studies in a series exploring how a select group of New York City schools are functioning in light of the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE). In 2012-13, New York launched its second year of these Expectations, asking school leaders and teachers to "adjust their practice as they work together to understand the learning needs of all students...in order to support them in developing the qualities and skills necessary to enroll, persist, and succeed in college and careers."

To better understand what this work looks like in practice, six schools were selected for in-depth study during the second half of the 2012-13 school year. Eskolta identified these schools based on Quality Review (QR) data that suggested they had experienced moderate success with implementation of the CIE (according to QR indicators aligned to the CIE), along with socioeconomic data that suggested they served a proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch that was equal to or greater than the average of all NYC schools. The research across all six schools was conducted by a team of two researchers and included 107 interviews and 91 observations over five months.

While this study provides insight into schools' implementation of practices in their efforts to align to the CIE, it is neither intended to establish the impact of the CIE, nor is the fact that a particular practice is highlighted at a school intended to imply that that practice is encouraged by the CIE or the NYC Department of Education. Rather, the report is designed to investigate two research hypotheses: first, that schools that see the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) as two integrated parts of one initiative are able to create meaningful change in teacher practice; and second, that guided by the CIE, schools can take actions to improve student work and teacher practice. Five themes emerged across these case studies:

❶ **Setting a Schoolwide Approach.** Effective integration of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the Common Core Learning Standards, both central elements of the CIE, improved with a schoolwide approach independently established by the school.

❷ **Promoting Adult Learning.** Changes in teacher practice arose when leaders promoted a culture of adult learning that highlighted internal needs over external pressures.

❸ **Sustaining Critical Thinking.** Instructional shifts pushed student learning when teachers coupled higher-order questioning with attention to academic behaviors.

❹ **Enabling Regular Instructional Adjustments.** Students experienced multiple paths to rigorous learning when school structures allowed for frequent assessment to drive strategic groupings.

❺ **Optimizing Systems for Collaboration.** Collaborative inquiry became central to teacher practice when leadership provided objectives and focused schedules on a common curricular area.

This particular case study of a New York City high school is comprised of three brief stories, each of which ties to at least one theme. These are outlined on the next page.

The case study is based on research conducted during approximately 42 hours of visits to Autherine Lucy Prep Middle School between February and May 2013, including twenty-five interviews (with twenty-six teachers, one principal, one instructional coach, and one consultant) and sixteen observations. In order to encourage participation and candor, confidentiality was guaranteed to all study participants. All participants provided informed consent per Institutional Review Board guidelines and all names have been changed to protect confidentiality. (For more detail, see Study Methodology in *Part I: Themes, Implications, and Methodology*.)

Autherine Lucy Prep Middle School

In 2008, a New York City neighborhood needed middle schools, and Katy Holliday, a former elementary school principal, decided to start one. With the vision and hard work of a team of teachers and consultants, Autherine Lucy Prep opened in 2009-10 and has been learning and growing as a school community ever since. Ms. Holliday says that Lucy Prep is one of "the needy schools that are trying hard." Among the over-400 students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, about three-quarters qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, just over one quarter are English language learners (ELLs), and almost a quarter have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for receiving special education services. Over 50 students are Black, almost 350 are Hispanic, and fewer than ten are White.

Teachers at Lucy Prep work collaboratively in teams every week, meeting at least twice a week to plan and discuss student work together. The English Language Arts (ELA) and math teams consist of multiple teachers from each grade level. But in the non-core subject areas, such as science and social studies, there is only one teacher per grade.

Demonstrating a productive routine of collaborative work as a team, Lucy Prep's science department is notable in its attention to literacy skills and its focus on jointly assessing student work as a means to drive planning and instruction. The science team consists of three teachers, Ms. Sisko and Ms. Marciniak, both second-year teachers, and Mr. Zak, who has been teaching in elementary and middle schools for over 20 years. They all demonstrate a passion for science, for children, and for improving their own practice. The example of this science team illustrates how teachers at Lucy Prep plan and implement curriculum, how they receive support from the administration and each other, and how they infuse their science content with literacy and math skills.

The three stories that comprise this case study each highlight different aspects of this work and tie back to one or more of the five themes that emerged across the entire research study.

Pages	Title	Themes	Focus
4-5	Creating a Set of Coherent Ideas and Structures to Connect the Work	❶ setting a schoolwide approach	Leaders use a set of concise principles established within the school to integrate rigorous standards contained in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the CCLS. Coupled with a schoolwide instructional model, this affords teachers a sense of cohesion and consistency in the work.
6-8	Planning Writing-Rich Assignments in Science	❺ optimizing collaboration ❸ sustaining critical thinking ❹ enabling instructional adjustments	CCLS-aligned skills are embedded throughout the curriculum thanks to teachers' efforts to align units in each department. The science team's work provides a lens into structured collaborative inquiry enabling teachers to develop common expectations for higher-order thinking in student learning. In order to assess students' skills and plan for differentiation, rubrics are integrated into every assignment.
9-11	Setting a Positive, Supportive Tone for Adult Development	❷ promoting adult learning	Teachers at Lucy Prep experience feedback on their practice as a responsive support to their needs rather than an imposition. The principal sets a positive tone through a coherent vision, regular provision of resources, and professional development opportunities.

Creating a Set of Coherent Ideas and Structures to Connect the Work

At Lucy Prep, a relatively new school, leaders use a set of concise principles present since its founding to easily integrate rigorous standards contained in the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the CCLS. Coupled with a schoolwide instructional model, this affords teachers a sense of cohesion and consistency that eases the work. Alongside this overarching vision, a teacher-centered approach to professional development and carefully crafted schedules increase collaboration and focus for teachers. [key theme: ❶ **setting a schoolwide approach**]

Understanding Lucy Prep begins with understanding the four core principles that leaders and teachers consistently use as a lens for all of the work they do. According to Becky Silver, one of the school's two consultants, these four practices are easily integrated with the Quality Review (QR) and *Framework*: "We've reduced our belief system to four practices, based on brain research. Then we aligned them to the QR rubric. We can put these four practices right into the *Framework* competencies, too. We're developing a consistency across classrooms and staff. There are no outliers. And it makes rollout easier across everything because there's a center." Becky says it is "message redundancy." The four practices, posted in every classroom, are:

1. Provision of appropriately challenging tasks (Becky explains, "That's differentiation.")
2. Feedback to students (Ms. Holliday reflects, "The impact of timely feedback can be remarkable.")
3. Modeling and explicit instruction (Lori Parks, the literacy coach, comments, "We teach, share exemplars, show what's expected; it's about making thinking visible.")
4. Engagement and rigor (Ms. Parks states, "This is about student-to-student discussion and higher-order thinking, especially for struggling students.")

The focus is explicitly on instruction and student learning and engagement. Teachers implement these practices within a clear schoolwide expectation that they use a workshop model, which includes a warm-up, mini-lesson, group work, and sharing of work, and is evident in virtually every classroom. Ms. Holliday explains, "It's all about small group instruction."

Becky speaks to the nature of the CIE and how it all fits within the school's vision of good instruction, "It's a triumvirate and that's how we talk about it with teachers. Curriculum and the Common Core is 'the what.' The Danielson [*Framework*] is 'the how.' The Quality Review is the 'how good is it?' So they don't think there are three separate things happening. There's a coherence. In learning, for kids and adults, it has to make sense." Teachers speak about the value of the CCLS in the work they have done this year. One teacher explains, "We use the Common Core as a rudder. It helps guide us with units."

From Ms. Holliday's and Ms. Parks' perspective, the other side of this clear focus is a responsiveness to teacher needs. Ms. Parks describes how professional development topics emerge from "what we see and what they need." Sharing an example of this differentiation, she explains that three new teachers get mentoring while other teachers have been sent to Network trainings. She reflects, "We stopped doing PDs for the whole staff. Whole group instruction doesn't work for kids, or for adults." For example, Ms. Holliday and Ms. Parks used to meet with everyone teaching literacy at the same time, but now they ask teachers to meet in small groups. According to Ms. Holliday, stepping back as a leader is another aspect of this strategy. She reflects with Ms. Parks, "Remember the first year? Oh, I was crazy. I used to do the planning meeting and the inquiry meeting. Now I've learned to hold them accountable. You all meet, this is what you have to do, give me the results. I meet with teachers as needed."

Ms. Holliday, in close collaboration with Ms. Parks, has created a schedule and allocated resources to make sure every team in the school meets at least twice each week. One of these sessions is oriented around looking at student work, another focuses on planning. Ms. Holliday acknowledges that when she created time, space, and funding for teachers to engage in planning, "the tradeoff was to not hire an AP." Instead, she depends on Ms. Parks to provide resources and instructional support. She points out how this investment positively affects teachers, "We spend a lot of money; we pay teachers to plan. There is an incentive to continue planning and learning together." Ms. Holliday designates per-session funds so that every team can meet together after school once every week. In addition to their two weekly meetings, teachers also have common prep times. One of the school's more experienced teachers notes, "In my other school there was no time to collaborate. The principal here has a lot to do with it. She adjusts our schedule to make it happen."

Ms. Holliday views her school as developing along with its students and teachers, "Lucy Prep is not perfect. We're a work in progress." This year, she reorganized staffing so that teachers are now teaching on one grade level and in one subject area. According to Ms. Parks, "They can focus on their students and curriculum rather than trying to do too much at once. They can focus on working deeply within their teams." Teachers say they value this change and feel more successful, "Last year, I taught three classes with almost 100 students in two grades—two curricula at the same time. There wasn't enough time in the day to grade homework. I was really overwhelmed. Now I teach two ICT classes and only one grade."

Ms. Holliday describes another major change in how they manage their students as she quips, "Middle school kids need more supervision than Pre-K!" Before the year began, Ms. Holliday and Ms. Parks organized the groupings, schedules, and space to minimize student time in hallways. Literacy and math classrooms are now next door to each other, and social studies and science are typically taught in those classrooms, too. Teachers escort students to science lab, gym, and lunch. According to Ms. Holliday, "This made a big difference in the climate, with our behavior statistics. The staff is working together. We want all kids to succeed." The teachers report that this helps them focus on teaching. One expresses appreciation for Ms. Holliday's responsiveness, "We moved away from freedom in transitions to being more structured to reduce management problems, reflecting the self-reflectiveness of our principal. She is willing to make changes."

Planning Writing-Rich Assignments in Science

At Lucy Prep, CCLS-aligned skills are embedded throughout the curriculum thanks to teachers' shared efforts to design and align units in each department. The science team's work provides a lens into structured collaborative inquiry as a process that enables teachers to develop common expectations for student learning and student work. In order to assess students' skills and plan for differentiation, teachers use rubrics that they have aligned to literacy standards across content areas and review student work from writing-rich science lessons. [key themes: ❺ **optimizing collaboration** + ❸ **sustaining critical thinking** + ❹ **enabling instructional adjustments**]

The bell rings over the loudspeaker signaling the start of second period. As the hallways empty of students, Ms. Sisko and Ms. Marciniak join Mr. Zak in room 517 for the first of their two science team meetings that day. Mr. Zak, the sixth-grade science teacher, places their three-inch binder full of notes and forms on the table. He is the facilitator for today's Assessing Student Work meeting. Ms. Marciniak, the eighth-grade teacher, reaches for a blank template to take notes. Ms. Sisko, the presenter, begins speaking about her seventh-grade class:

"This lesson was on the circulatory and respiratory systems," she starts, providing additional detail on the lesson as she hands out the plan she had used. She specifically states that the lesson was aligned to CCLS 7.W.1b for evidence and accountable talk, 7.W.2d for domain-specific vocabulary, and 7.W.4 for presentation. She explains that students were asked to take their own pulses while resting, while walking in place, and after doing jumping jacks. "Here's the rubric I used for the assignment," she says, handing out another document, "and here is a lab report from Jackie." She adds, "Vocabulary is a big push, especially for ELLs." Jackie, a new immigrant, has been learning English at the same time as delving into the content of seventh grade. The teachers have seen her English skills progress significantly over the first seven months of the school year.

For the next few minutes, the teachers review the copies of the student's lab report alongside the rubric Ms. Sisko has handed out. Although she had mentioned specific standards from the CCLS before, the team's focus is now on the rubric. Together the team considers the first row: *Data. Professional-looking and accurate representation of the data in tables and/or graphs. Graphs and tables are labeled and titled.*

"On the money," Mr. Zak notes, pointing to Jackie's colorful and detailed bar graph, and the teachers nod in agreement, marking a four on the rubric. They move on to the next category: *Scientific Concepts. Report illustrates an accurate and thorough understanding of scientific concepts underlying the lab.* Some discussion ensues as Ms. Marciniak and Mr. Zak both insist the student's answer is a three, while Ms. Sisko has given it a four.

Ms. Sisko presses, "Tell me why. Explain to me why."

Mr. Zak responds definitively, "She could elaborate more. It's not *all* the concepts that she describes, but most of them." He points to a phrase in the lab report where the student explains how more activity had increased her heart rate, but didn't make a connection to the need for more oxygen, "Even though she clearly understood the lesson, her thinking isn't all evident here. When conferencing with her, you could give her a few pointers to be more specific and express what she wants to say."

Collaborative inquiry on the science team ties directly into work in the class. A third of teachers at Lucy Prep are in their second or third year of teaching, and Ms. Parks reports that collaborating with colleagues reduces the isolation and struggles typically experienced by new teachers, "Many teachers are new. They get a lot of support, mentoring, time to work together."

Earlier this year, the science teachers used their weekly planning times to alternate between planning for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. Together, they created "from scratch" two CCLS-aligned units for each grade, along with additional CCLS-aligned science units based on the Full Option Science System (FOSS) curriculum. Writing for science appears in the majority of lessons and labs. Students must document their hypotheses, observations, and conclusions; this work is scaffolded for them with lab report questions from the FOSS lab books or teacher-created packets. The charts of unit and "Investigation" plans, accompanied by supporting handouts, homework, rubrics, and materials, detail the skills, content, and standards in each lesson. Mr. Zak explains, "We are supporting the ELA Department as well. And it helps us, too: so the students create better products, so they use domain-specific vocabulary."

Questioning and discussion techniques also play a role in encouraging students to think critically and support their ideas with specific evidence, as can be seen in this view of Mr. Zak's lesson on ecosystems and food webs:

> On a Wednesday morning in early April, Mr. Zak explains to his sixth graders that they will be comparing what they learned yesterday about Mono Lake's ecosystem to what they are about to see in a video clip today.

> "Note the differences between the film and textbook. We are training to be scientists, to compare," he explains. Before starting the video, he previews with the students four or five vocabulary words written on the board. A question about brine shrimp, one of the terms on the list, turns into a short discussion of brine and the difference between sea and river water. Students reference their open textbooks on the tables as they watch the film and write in their science journals. Mr. Zak walks around, stopping at each table to check students' work and remind them to keep writing and charting. Aware that one boy who is listing words without details needs extra literacy support, Mr. Zak talks with him during the movie about adding more information in complete sentences to his writing.

> Later in the lesson, Mr. Zak asks, "Why would the gull be hanging around the lake?"

> A student responds, "So it can eat the animals in the lake."

> Mr. Zak probes for more information, "What animals? As a good writer, a good scientist, you have to be specific. You'll get more points on the rubric, too." And then he digs even deeper, "What kind of relationship is going on with the brine shrimp, brine flies, and California gulls?" Students discuss the food chain. "Yes!" he exclaims, "But I wonder if we'll find another animal that eats the seagull. And are human beings involved in that chain or web?" As the bell rings, Mr. Zak tells the class that the next lesson will continue their case study of Mono Lake, focusing on why these organisms can live there and how they interact.

In another weekly Assessing Student Work meeting, the three teachers look for evidence of conceptual understanding in students' lab reports and writing. For one assignment, "Why is photosynthesis essential?" students were asked to write and present a diagram which explained the process and importance of photosynthesis. While the teachers identify that Miguel's writing needs "more specific domain vocabulary" and that he needs to re-read and edit his work to avoid conventional errors, the teachers all agree that the supporting drawing is clear and labeled. He drew connections between plants and animals, and his understanding is evident.

Ms. Sisko exclaims, "I love the conclusion! The writing is purposeful."

The student had written, "In conclusion, the plants breathe the carbon dioxide. It's like a cycle that helps us live together, better and longer. That's probably why some people say talking to plants is a good thing."

Teachers maintain binders of assessment charts and anecdotal notes on students' classwork and assignments. Mr. Zak refers to one student's paragraph about Mono Lake, "For the Mono Lake Investigation, they read and respond to a text. They have to be able to identify answers. Look at her ELA conventions: there are complete sentences. At the beginning of the year, she struggled." Mr. Zak explains that this kind of progress happens as a result of working with students either individually or in small groups: "It's all through conferencing. Their misconceptions are cleared up right there; they get to ask questions. And we're using a rubric to guide them."

Mr. Zak shares his assessment of a student's lab report on levers and comments, "I'm looking for accuracy in the math, the graphing. The answer makes no sense, but this child is a Spanish speaker. She already came a long way. She used an extra piece that's not necessary." He then compares two recent pieces of writing by a student, "With Sophia, this one, I had a conference with her. See how she improved? She then calibrated the graph; she interpreted and explained the data correctly. The answer was so perfect."

In response to a question in Investigation One of a lesson on levers, Sophia had written, "The relation is that the two nombers need to mach [*sic*]," but her response to a similar question in Investigation Two was, "The further away the effort is on the fulcrum, it is easier to lift the load." Mr. Zak notes, "The first time was 68%, Level Two, but she went to 80%, Level Three."

Setting a Positive, Supportive Tone for Adult Development

Teachers at Lucy Prep consistently experience feedback on their practice not as an imposition but rather as a responsive support to their needs. Teachers credit the principal with setting this positive tone through a coherent vision and regular provision of resources, along with professional development opportunities that engage them as learners. While the principal uses the Danielson *Framework* to guide interactions with teachers and visits classrooms frequently, she intentionally does not use these structures for evaluative judgments. [key theme: ❷ **adult learning**]

Just as Ms. Holliday believes in "educating students totally, both emotionally and academically," she also is committed to the learning and wellbeing of the adults in her school. Many teachers at Autherine Lucy Prep Middle School credit their principal with setting a tone that makes teacher-to-teacher support possible, describing Ms. Holliday as "fair," "open," and exuding a "positive vibe." Teachers explain that "we're allowed to grow." This is particularly evident in the ways teachers experience informal and formal observations and feedback.

Lucy Prep started its work with the CIE with an advantage over many schools; they had begun using the *Framework* long before it became a DOE expectation. Ms. Holliday reflects on their first year, "When we opened the school, we used Danielson's books and developmental framework and watched the middle school videos as a faculty." Teachers meet with Ms. Holliday at the beginning of each year and, using the *Framework*, identify a specific goal related to their own professional practice. While these goals become part of the conversation each time Ms. Holliday observes teachers, she does not use the Highly Effective to Ineffective ratings. "I'm trying to build a culture of trust," she explains, "It's not the language I need to move the work."

Ms. Holliday says she also relies on Ms. Parks, along with the school's math and literacy consultants, to coach and provide feedback to teachers. Becky, the literacy consultant, describes how they use the *Framework*, "We don't have to name the competencies by 2a, 3b, but everyone knows what we expect. We keep the conversation tight with that lens."

Teachers report that Ms. Holliday offers suggestions, whether in the hallway or during post-observation meetings. One teacher notes, "My goal is differentiation and she suggested that I could change the Do Now and give the students choices."

Another teacher shares, "Feedback is informally constant, almost every day. In a passing conversation, she'll ask me, 'How's Task One going?'"

Ms. Holliday strives to observe two teachers every day, focusing on formative feedback. On average, she reports that she is able to see each person at least once every month, but also makes sure to get into some classrooms more often, "especially for new teachers and anyone who might be struggling." Together, they choose one or, at most, two next steps so that the teacher can focus on one specific aspect of his or her practice at a time.

One teacher said, "We get a lot of feedback early on. I was observed maybe fifteen times, and then there were meetings and follow-up work with the consultants."

Administrative support goes beyond observations and feedback, and teachers are quick to note that Ms. Holliday ensures they have the resources they need to meet her requests. Ms. Sisko explains, "Ms. Holliday helped me with STEM technology. She gave me websites so I could watch other teachers' lessons."

Another teacher reports, "We're always asked, several times a week. 'What do you need?'" The shelves in the teacher meeting/special education rooms are filled with books and resources such as the Fountas and Pinnell

Prompting Guides, Bloom's Taxonomy and question stems, and Allington's videos about reaching struggling readers.

One teacher says, "The school is buying materials, doing the best they can. *Rosetta Stone* for ELLs, *Achieve 3000*, SRIs, *Fast Math*." And yet, teachers, coaches, and the principal express an almost desperate need for CCLS curricular materials at appropriate instructional reading levels and also in Spanish.

As another general leadership principle, Ms. Holliday believes that teachers shouldn't have to develop curriculum. She explains, "Teaching is a complex, difficult task; it's about delivery, scaffolds, differentiation. It's not healthy to ask teachers to be curriculum writers too." Reaching this goal has been a challenge this year as most teacher teams have spent the majority of their planning meetings developing CCLS-aligned units and lessons, and Ms. Holliday and Ms. Parks express frustration that they have not been able to provide a year's worth of district curriculum to their teachers.

Even without access to all the CCLS materials they would like, Ms. Holliday and Ms. Parks provide CCLS and Danielson support throughout the year in the form of PD sessions that target specific areas of need they have identified in student work and/or teacher practice.

> In early February, a group of newer teachers gather in a math classroom during lunch to meet with Lori Parks and Becky Silver for a voluntary "Lunch and Learn." One teacher asks if she should be here and Becky responds, "Students were asked to use evidence from the text to support their opinion and respond to the prompt. And we're looking at the obstacles kids are facing. So, yes, because it's the same kind of work in Social Studies. Common Core writing is happening in all subjects." She then adds, "And you get lunch!"

> The desks are arranged in hexagonal clusters so that teachers can discuss the student response to an ELA simulation prompt. Becky had already sorted through the students' work samples, culling ones that might "help us address some of the more challenging issues that ELLs and students with disabilities face." She begins by asking the teachers, "If we're really going to do Common Core preparation, what do we need?"

> A teacher answers, "The standards," and Becky responds by handing out a rubric that is standards-aligned.

> She then asks two questions, "How do we know how good is good enough? And, more important than giving a number, what do we do to help the kid?" Each group gets to work looking at two different pieces of student work, discussing and documenting what they notice about strengths, areas of need, and implications or next instructional steps.

At the end of May, with state testing finished, the *Framework* has become the focus of planned professional development (PD) sessions. After an initial after-school session focused on Danielson, Ms. Holliday reflects that a new approach is needed, "They just didn't seem as engaged. Their feedback forms weren't so great. So I checked with the UFT [United Federation of Teachers] person who said, 'Maybe they were tired. They'd like to lead some, too.' And since we're working on a grant for lead teachers, it seemed like a perfect opportunity." By the next day, Ms. Holliday had created a posting to hire the PD Teacher Facilitator-Presenters.

Within a few days, Ms. Nagai, a SETSS (Special Education Teacher Support Services) teacher, and Ms. Margolis, an eighth-grade math teacher, volunteer to facilitate a Chancellor's Day PD session that will help their colleagues understand and use one or two of the Danielson competencies. Both have had some training in coaching and using the *Framework*, and they are excited to take on this role. Ms. Margolis explains, "When teachers are helping other teachers, it's a little bit of a different feeling than when an administrator is working with a teacher; there's a little more trust there."

It is Thursday at lunchtime when Ms. Nagai and Ms. Margolis arrive in the Special Education room on the fifth floor to plan their workshop. Together with Becky Silver and Lori Parks, the two teachers outline the objectives for the session, look at a structure for developing the agenda, and brainstorm activities they might lead. Becky shares the book *Implementing the Framework for Teaching in Enhancing Professional Practice*, and the teachers mention how helpful that resource would be for finding specific handouts and engaging activities. They wonder whether to focus only on Component 3b (*Using questioning and discussion techniques*) for two hours or to split the time and also include Component 3d (*Using assessment in instruction*).

Ms. Margolis asks about the recent mock Quality Review, "It seems like questioning is the bigger urgency. Teachers need more help in that area?"

Ms. Nagai adds, "But we need to make the link: questioning leads to feedback and feedback leads to more questions."

After brainstorming a few additional ideas, they plan their next steps. Becky will email them a planning template and a questioning grid and the two teachers will meet again to draft an agenda. The discussion concludes with Becky saying, "Be clear about your objectives. What do you want teachers to walk away with? I'm turning this over to you."

Ms. Parks, who had left the room a few minutes earlier, returns and is on her computer in the corner of the room. She announces just as the teachers get up to leave, "The book is ordered. It will be here in two days."

When asked about the support she gets from the administration, one teacher captures what so many of her colleagues also describe, "I know they're all on my side."

Ms. Holliday says she works to protect her teachers from external pressures as much as she possibly can. "I try not to let the chaos reach the teachers. It's not going to help them. Things happen here in the office that they don't need to know about. My job is to frame the changes in a way that's doable for teachers and kids."

Teachers regularly describe the sense of shared vision that they experience at Lucy Prep. One teacher reflects, "All the teachers are so supportive. We're all for the kids. Everybody's on the same page, like we're a family."