

Insomniac Cards

New initiatives can create levels of anxiety in staff members that may sabotage improvement efforts. Surfacing these underlying issues at the beginning stage of a new initiative may ease some natural fears that come with the world of change. Insomniac Cards are one way to surface those thoughts that might keep staff members up at night. When concerns surface, the building leader or leadership team can systematically plan for and minimize most problems in a proactive manner.

Goal(s):

To surface concerns from staff members about transitioning to the Common Core State Standards to be dealt with proactively to insure a smoother transition.

Prep:

5x7 index cards, felt tip pens, chart paper, overhead or PowerPoint slide, dots (enough for five per participant)

Directions:

1. Facilitator creates an overhead transparency or PowerPoint slide prior to the faculty meeting/workshop with the question, "What might keep me up at night when transitioning to the CCSS?"
2. Facilitator informs the staff, "*When ever people embark on a new initiative/direction, it's natural to cause some degree of discomfort and possibly some sleepless nights. Today's activity is designed to surface some of your concerns about transitioning to the CCSS, so we can deal with them early on in this process.*" or something similar as best matches with your specific staff.
3. Today you will be working in triads, recording your concerns on index cards, and reporting out to the whole group.
4. Facilitator displays the day's question on the overhead projector, lcd projector, SmartBoard, or other.
5. Inform the staff to take 2 minutes and 17 seconds to think about this question to his/herself.
6. At the completion of the thinking time, the facilitator brings the group's attention back to him/her. He/she has the staff form groups of three. Sometimes parameters might be helpful such as, organize triads so groups consist of faculty outside the familiar (grade level or team).
7. Staff should be given 10 -12 minutes to discuss and record on the index cards potential "insomniac" issues.
8. Facilitator calls groups' attention back. With easel and chart paper or posted chart paper to the left and the right of the group with a scribe for each chart paper, ask for someone to share concerns that were raised in their triads. The facilitator should paraphrase the concerns into brief statements and the scribes alternate recording the facilitator's paraphrases.
9. Sharing continues until all groups have shared their concerns. Then facilitator reviews all recorded concerns.

10. If time permits (if not this is a good starting point at the next faculty meeting), provide the participants with 5 sticky dots and have them place the dots next to their most pressing concerns. (The information gathered will provide the leadership team with direction as to what areas to address first in the transition process. The number of concerns surfaced during this work will help guide the speed in moving through the different parts of the CCSS. The judgment of the leadership team is critical in gauging the faculty's readiness to move on. It is important to also remember that there is never a "perfect" time to initiate change, so DON'T wait for all the stars to be aligned...)