



Improving School Culture in Simulated Workplaces: Workshop Series

Facilitators' Handbook

Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia at SRI International

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Introduction for Facilitators

Simulated Workplace, West Virginia’s career and technical education (CTE) model launched in 2013, aims to empower students to take responsibility for their own learning trajectory and outcomes by engaging them in authentic work experiences. To assess implementation and inform continuous improvement, the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) has administered a statewide school culture survey to all Simulated Workplace administrators, counselors, teachers, and students for the last several years.

This workshop series arose from WVDE’s efforts to measure and foster student engagement and student empowerment in Simulated Workplaces. The workshops guide Simulated Workplace administrators, educators, and students in reviewing and interpreting their own school culture survey results to identify possible areas for improvement and plan to strengthen aspects of their school culture. The workshop materials include three components: a facilitator’s handbook, scripted slides, and a participant workbook.

Positive school culture and why it matters

School culture comprises the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that arise over time from how people treat and feel about each other, as well as how the school community faces challenges and celebrates successes (Peterson & Deal, 2009).

Why is focusing on school culture important? Whether positive or negative, school culture affects how teachers, staff, and students interact with one another. Research has found a positive school culture benefits both students and teachers (table I-1).

Table I-1. Benefits of positive school culture

Research shows positive school culture is associated with increased...	
Benefits for students	Benefits for teachers
Achievement (Geier et al., 2008)	Job satisfaction (Anderman, 1991)
Attendance (Kemple et al., 1999)	Commitment (Collie et al., 2012)
Engagement and empowerment (Ellis et al., 2018)	Collaboration (Hixson et al., 2012)
Social-emotional learning (Hixson et al., 2012)	

How to use the workshop materials

The materials will guide administrators, educators, and students through a workshop series focused on strengthening school culture in Simulated Workplaces. The following tables provide an overview of the workshop series (table I-2), a description of each component of the materials (table I-3), guidance on how to use them (table I-4), and objectives for each of the workshops in the series (table I-5).

Table I-2. Overview of the workshop series

Overview of the workshop series	
What is it?	This three-part workshop series provides a step-by-step process for strengthening school culture that engages educators and students to work together as a team.
Who leads the process?	Simulated Workplace state coordinators, administrators, or others can use the facilitator handbook, alongside the other workshop materials, to lead the workshops.
Who participates?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team of approximately 12–16 teacher and student leaders, and possibly counselors or school staff in other roles, can participate in the workshops to develop plans to strengthen school culture. The workshop participants will then engage the whole school community in implementing the plans to strengthen school culture.
Total time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop facilitators: About 8–10 hours total to prepare for and run the three workshops. Participants: About four hours total to participate in all three workshops, plus time to complete steps in between. See table I-5 for the estimated duration of each workshop.

Table I-3. About the three components of the workshop materials

The three components of the workshop materials	
Scripted slide deck	Workshop facilitators will use the slide deck to present the concepts and introduce the activities participants will complete together during the workshops. A script that accompanies the slides is in the slide notes. Slide notes also contain guidance to support facilitators' presentation of the content and activities.
Participant workbook	Workshop participants will follow along using the participant workbook . This document summarizes the information presented in the slides for participants to reference. It also contains instructions, prompts, and space to take notes for reflection and discussion activities to be completed during the workshops. The participant workbook is designed for participants to read, to themselves and in groups, although facilitators may prefer to read some of the content aloud.
Facilitators' handbook (this document)	The facilitators' handbook contains the full participant workbook, with additional instructions for leading activities. Facilitators will use their handbooks when referring participants to their workbooks.

Each workshop provides background information and guidance for participants to complete a set of activities to learn about positive school culture, review and interpret school culture survey data, identify priorities, and make plans to continuously improve school culture. Different icons and fonts signal different elements of the participant workbook and facilitators' handbook to aid in using them. These icons and fonts are presented in table I-4.

Table I-4. Aids for using the participant workbook and facilitator handbook








Special icons and fonts indicate...	
In the participant workbook...	Example
Headers that match those on the agenda slides found throughout each workshop help participants stay on track.	 Clear headers
A book icon indicates background information or information summarized in the accompanying slides for participants to read and refer back to later.	 Welcome to a workshop series on strengthening...
A conversation icon and italic font indicates instructions for workshop activities.	 <i>Let's start by reviewing the prompt below...</i>
Additionally, in the facilitators' handbook...	Example
At the start of every activity, a box will indicate the activity format, which slides to use, and the time needed to complete it.	<div>  Activity format  Slide numbers  Time needed </div>
A blue lightbulb icon and blue text, provided directly following relevant activities or content, indicates guidance on how to lead activities or prompt further discussion. Facilitators should review the entire workshop to ensure they understand the additional guidance provided in these blue-text sections before facilitating with a group.	 <div>Facilitator guidance on how to lead the workshop activities and/or prompt further discussion.</div>

Table I-5. Objectives for and estimated length of each workshop

Workshop 1	<p>Introduction to School Culture Improvement (1 hour)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about positive school culture and the school culture survey. • Develop a sense of shared interest and purpose in improving school culture. • Become familiar with the steps in the improvement cycle. • Plan who will lead and participate in school culture improvement.
Workshop 2	<p>Review and Interpret School Culture Survey Data (1 hour 30 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss state- and school-level school culture survey results. • Practice making accurate statements about the survey results. • Interpret the data-driven statements to celebrate strengths and begin to identify areas for improvement.
Workshop 3	<p>Identify Priorities (1 hour 20 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and agree on a priority for school culture improvement. • Learn how evidence-based practices support improvement efforts. • Review evidence-based practices in <i>Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators</i>.

Workshop 1: Introduction to School Culture Improvement

This is the first workshop in our three-part series focused on school culture. An overview of the first workshop is in table 1.

Table 1. Detailed overview of Workshop 1

Preparing for Workshop 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No participant preparation needed. • Facilitators review slides and activities for the workshop.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about positive school culture and the school culture survey. • Develop a sense of shared interest and purpose in improving school culture. • Become familiar with the steps in the improvement cycle. • Plan who will lead and participate in school culture improvement.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant workbook and slides • Pens, name tags
Agenda and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total workshop time: 1 hour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome (5 minutes) - Opening activity: If my school were an animal (15 minutes) - Positive school culture and why it matters (10 minutes) - About the Simulated Workplace school culture survey (10 minutes) - Using a continuous improvement approach (5 minutes) - Who leads and participates in school improvement (10 minutes) - Looking ahead to Workshop 2 (5 minutes)

Welcome



Welcome to a workshop series on strengthening school culture in Simulated Workplaces. This workshop series was designed in a collaboration between the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) and the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Appalachia.



Facilitator presentation



Slides 1–4



5 minutes

During the first workshop in the series, we will learn about:

- Positive school culture and why it matters.
- The Simulated Workplace school culture survey.
- The continuous improvement approach.
- Who can lead and participate in school improvement.
- What we will do in the second workshop.

Opening activity: If my school were an animal



Let's get ready to learn about school culture by first considering our own. The focus of this workshop series is improving school culture, but what is school culture in general, and specifically, what is our school's culture?

After we address the prompt below in small groups, we will identify similarities and differences in how each group completed the prompt as a starting point to our work together.



Small group discussion



Slides 5–6



15 minutes



Let's start by working together in small groups to review the sentence prompt below and complete it.

If my school were an animal, it would be a (an) _____

because _____.



Ask participants to break into groups of three or four people for five minutes to discuss how to complete the sentence. Participants can take notes on this discussion in their workbooks. Ideally, for this activity, participants should be grouped with peers (students with students, teachers with teachers, etc.) so all feel they can speak freely.


Then, reconvene the groups and ask each group to share how they answered the prompt. As each group shares, listen for the following:

- Did groups choose similar animals or different ones?
- Did students and teachers choose different types of animals?
- Does a favorite emerge?

Finally, lead a discussion of any themes and patterns among the responses. Consider using the following prompts to characterize the animals that each group chose:

- Are the animals strong? Aggressive? Nurturing?
- Do they announce their presence or do they hide?
- Are they social animals or do they operate alone? What other characteristics do they have?

Positive school culture and why it matters

 School culture encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that arise over time from how people treat and feel about each other, as well as how the school community faces challenges and celebrates successes (Peterson & Deal, 2009).

Everyone in a school contributes to its culture. Positive cultures arise from all parties deliberately choosing affirmative behavior such as maintaining high expectations for students; building meaningful staff-staff, staff-student, and student-student relationships; promoting trust and respect for all voices; and being open to give and receive constructive feedback.

Why is focusing on school culture important? Whether positive or negative, school culture affects how teachers, staff, and students interact with one another. Research has found a positive school culture renders benefits for both students and teachers (table 2).

Table 2. Benefits of positive school culture

Research shows positive school culture is associated with increased...	
Students	Teacher
Achievement (Geier et al., 2008)	Job satisfaction (Anderman, 1991)
Attendance (Kemple et al., 1999)	Commitment (Collie et al., 2012)
Engagement and empowerment (Ellis et al., 2018)	Collaboration (Hixson et al., 2012)
Social-emotional learning (Hixson et al., 2012).	



If asked, you can clarify that *school climate* refers to the school's effects on students, including teaching practices; diversity; and the relationships among administrators, teachers, parents, and students, whereas *school culture* refers to the way teachers and other staff members work together and the set of beliefs, values, and assumptions they share. *Both* a positive school climate and school culture promote students' ability to learn (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development [ASCD], 2020).



Facilitator presentation and whole group discussion



Slides 7–10



10 minutes

About the Simulated Workplace school culture survey



The focus on improving school culture in Simulated Workplaces arose from WVDE's efforts to realize its vision for Simulated Workplace's new, student-centered model of learning. As part of that effort, WVDE administers a school culture survey to all Simulated Workplace students, teachers, counselors, and administrators twice a year. Its purpose is to help schools better understand their culture and make improvements based on the results.



Facilitator presentation
and whole group discussion



Slides 11–19



10 minutes

Positive school culture constructs



Four constructs of positive school culture form the basis of the school culture survey. Individually review the constructs and examples on the next page. Then turn to page 7 (facilitator page 7) and take some notes in response to the reflection questions.



Student engagement/empowerment

- Students have a say in how their Simulated Workplace programs are run.
- Students take ownership of their learning process and work.
- Students work with teachers to evaluate their work and discuss how to improve.
- Students contribute to creating a positive learning environment.



Goal-setting/action planning

- Students contribute to setting personal and class-wide or program-wide goals.
- Students' courses help them set and achieve goals.
- Students get better at setting and achieving their goals.
- Students' Simulated Workplace experience helps them make career-related decisions.



Attitude/openness

- Students find their work to be meaningful.
- Students feel comfortable learning unfamiliar things.
- Students see how their work connects to their future careers.
- Students celebrate success in their work.



Collaboration

- Students work together to plan and do work.
- Students see the difference their contribution makes to the team.
- Students learn from peers and help peers learn.

Reflecting on our school culture

Which examples from the previous page align with strengths of your own school culture? Why do you think that?

Which examples from the previous page reflect something your school could improve on? Why do you think that?

How do the example statements you associate with strengths and areas for improvement relate to how you characterized your school when selecting an animal at the start of this workshop?



After participants have individually reviewed the four constructs of positive school culture and the example statements, ask them to spend a few minutes considering which statements reflect current strengths of their school's culture and which statements represent potential areas for improvement. Encourage them to take notes in their participant workbook. Then ask volunteers to share responses and listen for trends in what they say. Consider the following questions to prompt further discussion: Were there any discernable patterns in the statements the members of the group selected? Did group members select multiple examples statements from a certain construct when identifying strengths and/or areas for improvement? Do student and teacher participants have similar responses? Why or why not?

In Workshop 2, participants will dig into the school culture survey data. To generate excitement about Workshop 2, you can close this discussion of positive school culture by asking participants to hypothesize whether they think the survey data for their school will align with the example statements they selected as strengths and/or areas for improvement, and why.

Using a continuous improvement approach



In this workshop series, we will move through a continuous improvement cycle together. Just as businesses study their processes and results to improve over time, so can education institutions. Continuous improvement in education engages key stakeholders—such as school leaders, teachers, other staff, students, and families—to examine a specific problem of practice and engage in iterative cycles to test changes, gather data, and study the potential influence of these changes on outcomes of interest (Bryk et al., 2015).



Facilitator presentation



Slides 20–22



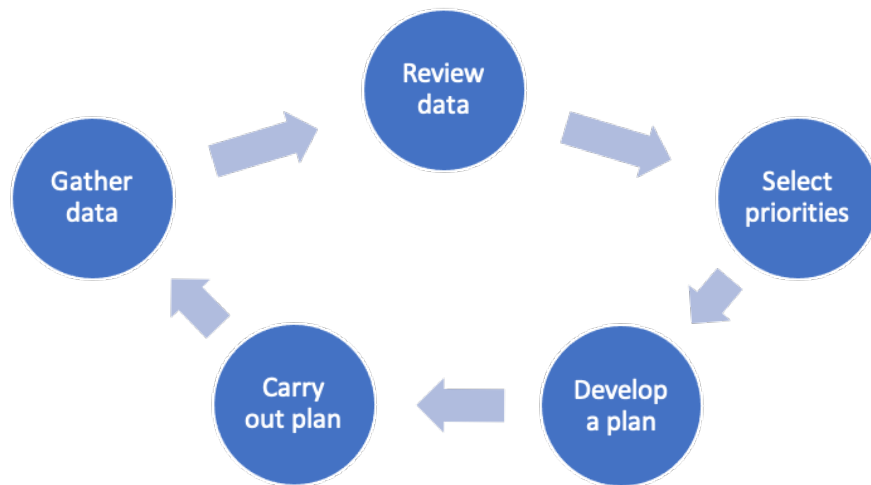
5 minutes

Figure 1 shows the steps of the cycle:

- **Review and discuss data** from the school culture survey and other information you may want to gather.

- Build on that discussion to identify strengths and areas for improvement, and **select priorities to work on to strengthen school culture.**
- **Develop a plan** to pursue these priorities for improvement.
- **Carry out** the plan.
- **Gather data** to determine if the work is making a difference.

Figure 1. Continuous improvement cycle



How the school culture surveys inform school improvement efforts

Survey data can play an important role in continuous improvement efforts for three reasons:

- Surveys can help you gather different perspectives on a given topic. Results can highlight how views differ and help identify areas around which there is broad agreement.
- Surveys with high response rates can provide an objective basis for in-depth discussion without singling out individuals or letting a few vocal people drive the agenda.
- Survey results can also help measure change in perceptions over time. Once you decide how you would like to strengthen your school culture, you can carry out these changes. Then you can administer the survey again to determine if your efforts resulted in the change you sought.

Who leads and participates in school improvement?



School culture impacts everyone in the school community. Everyone plays an important role in building a positive school culture. Therefore, before we tackle the next step in the school improvement process, we need to make sure we have the right mix of people at the table who can bring varied perspectives to this work.



Small group discussion



Slides 23–24



10 minutes



Take a few minutes to jot down your own thoughts about the prompts below, and then discuss with your neighbors.

Are a variety of leaders with different roles involved in the school improvement effort, including teachers, students, and counselors?

Are leaders from the full range of Simulated Workplace programs at our school involved in this effort?

Are people with a range of experience involved in this effort, such as teachers at different career stages and/or students from different grades?



Ask participants to take 2–3 minutes to respond to the three prompts above. Then ask them to discuss the prompts in small groups (7–8 minutes). You can discuss as a full group at the start of Workshop 2, which opens with a review of the constructs and related examples, before participants review and discuss survey data. Feel free to invite participants to write a few notes from their small group discussion so they can share their thoughts when the group reconvenes.

Looking ahead to Workshop 2



Thank you for your thoughtful engagement in this first workshop! Let's look ahead to the next workshop. In the next workshop, we will:

- Review and discuss state- and school-level school culture survey results.
- Practice making accurate statements about the survey results.
- Interpret the data-driven statements to celebrate strengths and begin to identify areas for improvement.



Facilitator presentation



Slide 25–27



5 minutes




Be sure to ask participants if they have any lingering questions before thanking everyone for participating and previewing the second workshop. You may also ask participants to share any feedback or constructive criticism in the spirit of modeling openness.

Workshop 2: Review and Interpret School Culture Survey Data

Table 3. Detailed overview of Workshop 2

Preparing for Workshop 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators may ask participants to review survey reports in advance. • Facilitators should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review state- and school-level survey reports. - Review process for creating “jigsaw groups” (groups that change midway through the activity) to review and interpret data (see page 19). - Decide how to break out the jigsaw groups and prepare numbered signs to differentiate groups.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss state- and school-level school culture survey results. • Practice making accurate statements about the survey results. • Interpret the data-driven statements to celebrate strengths and begin to identify areas for improvement.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant workbook and slides • Numbered cards for “jigsaw groups” • Handouts of the most recent school survey report (teacher and student results only) and statewide survey report
Agenda and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total time: 1 hour 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome back (2 minutes) - Recap of survey constructs and examples (5 minutes) - How to review and interpret school culture survey data (20 minutes) - Reviewing school and statewide survey results (45 minutes) - Deciding whether to gather additional information (optional) (15 minutes) - Look ahead to Workshop 3 (3 minutes)

Welcome back

 Welcome to the second workshop in our series on strengthening school culture in Simulated Workplaces.

During the second workshop in the series, we will:

- Review state- and school-level culture data.
- Practice making accurate statements about survey data
- Interpret the data-driven statements to celebrate strengths and begin to identify areas for improvement.



Facilitator presentation




Slides 28–29



2 minutes

Recap survey constructs and example statements

 *Let's refresh our memory of the four main constructs in the school culture survey before we dive into the process of reviewing survey results. Turn back to page 6 (facilitator page 6) to see the list of constructs and to page 7 (facilitator page 7) to see notes from our discussion of possible strengths and areas for improvement.*



Facilitator presentation
and whole group discussion



Slides 30–31




5 minutes



During the last workshop, individuals reviewed and discussed the survey constructs. To refresh the group's memory, you can ask a few participants to refer to notes from the last workshop and share some of the statements they selected as examples of strengths and areas for improvement, and why they selected them. After a few examples, also remind participants that during the last workshop, they discussed who should participate in school improvement efforts. Invite participants to share a few thoughts from small group discussions regarding who leads and participates in school improvement.

How to review and interpret school culture survey data

 Let's use the example of statewide survey results in figure 2 to learn how to read the survey report. These results show administrators' responses to one question. Responses from counselors, teachers, and students follow the same format.



Facilitator presentation

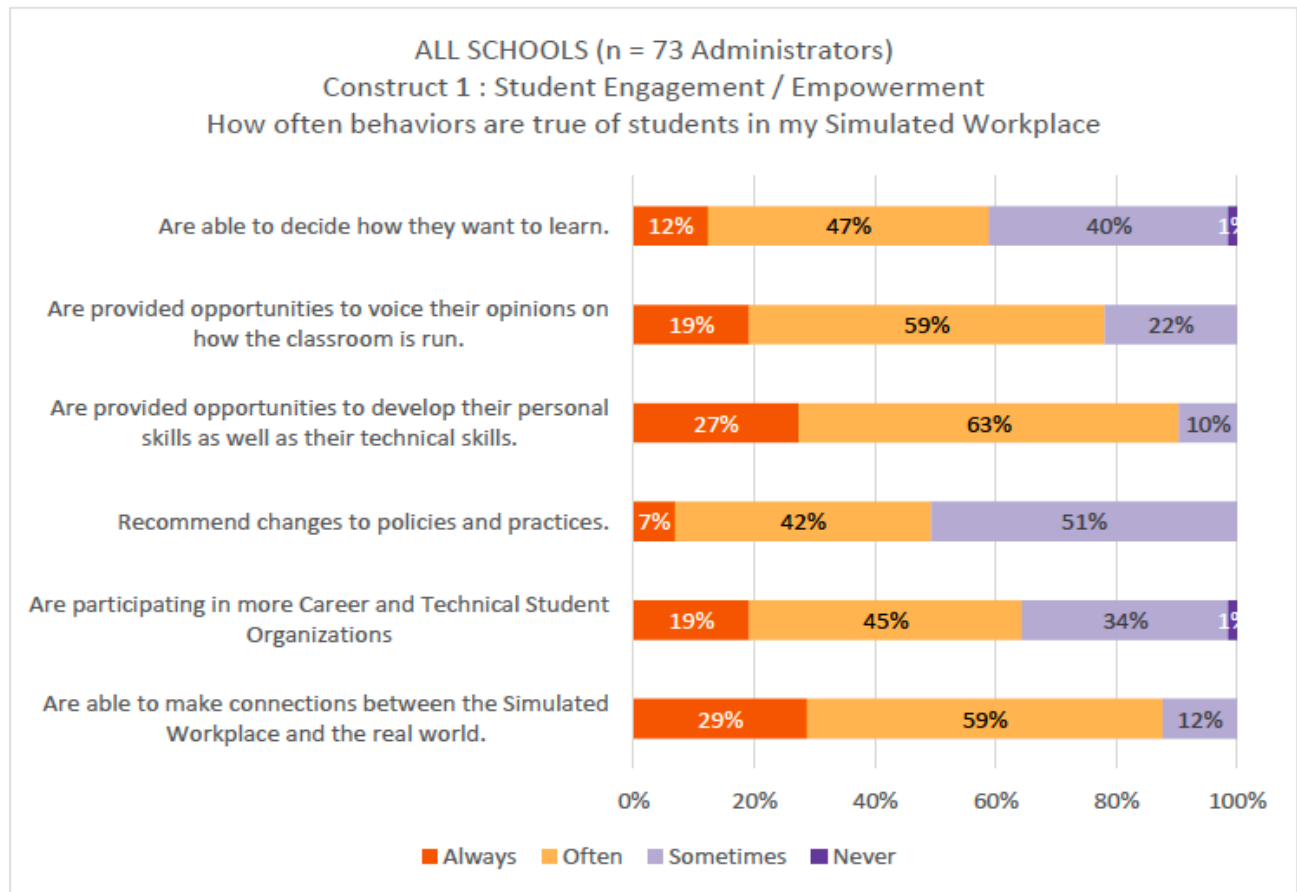


Slide 32–39



20 minutes

Figure 2. Example of statewide school culture survey results




Source: Excerpted from WVDE School Culture Survey Report: Statewide Results, 2019



The statewide survey report shows the results across the entire state Simulated Workplace system, from surveys completed by administrators, counselors, teachers, and students. Results from the statewide report will say ALL SCHOOLS at the top.

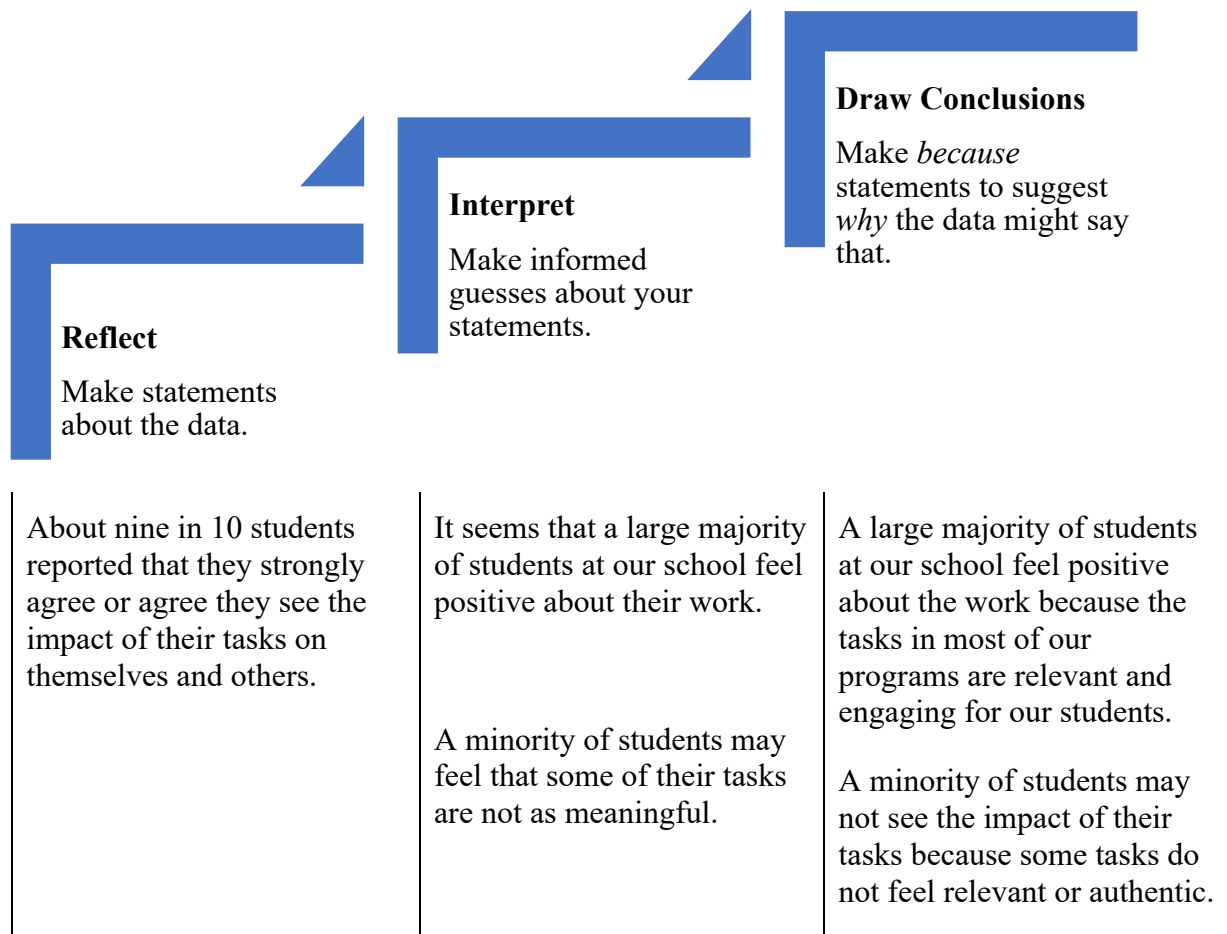
The results for each question are shown in the format you see above. At the top, you see the number and role of the people who responded to a given question—in this case, 73 administrators answered this question. You also see which construct the question is associated with—here, student engagement/empowerment. Directly below the construct is the question or statement for which the graphs shows results—in this example, “How often behaviors are true of students in my Simulated Workplace.” The bar graphs show the percentage of administrators who selected each possible response. See the key below the graph for the response options (in figure 2 the response options include *always*, *often*, *sometimes*, and *never*).

Steps for reviewing and interpreting data

 The process we will practice today—reflect, interpret, and draw conclusions—is designed to help you thoughtfully review the survey results before you begin interpreting them (figure 3). In other words, we will carefully *step* to conclusions, rather than jump to conclusions!

 *Let's practice with this example before we work with our own school results.*


Figure 3. Steps for reviewing and interpreting data



To build understanding of the survey data and how to interpret it, guide participants through the process and examples in slides 34–40. Check understanding by asking them to describe how the statements in the columns for *Reflect*, *Interpret*, and *Draw Conclusions* differ from one another.

Reviewing school and statewide survey data

Practice round

 As a whole group, choose a table or graph from your school survey report and complete each of the three steps in the review process: reflect, interpret, and draw conclusions based on what the data tell you. You can take notes under the example in table 4.



Whole group discussion



Slides 41–42



15 minutes


As you **Reflect**, **Interpret**, and **Draw Conclusions**, consider the following:

- **Normal variation.** It is normal that not everyone “strongly agrees” or “strongly disagrees” with every question on the survey. Determine which results reflect a positive culture and which indicate possible areas for improvement by noting where results seem generally positive or negative your survey report.
- **Comparing results.** Are your school results consistent with the statewide data? Are teacher and student responses similar or different on related questions?
- **Confidence.** You may be more confident about some conclusions than about others. Circle the conclusions you are less sure about. Write down questions you would want to answer to be more certain of those conclusions.

Table 4. Reflect, interpret, and draw conclusions based on school data – Whole group discussion

Reflect	Interpret	Draw Conclusions
<p><i>Example: About nine in 10 students reported that they strongly agree or agree that they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.</i></p>	<p><i>It seems that a large majority of students feel positive about their work.</i></p> <p><i>A minority of students may feel that some of their tasks are not as meaningful.</i></p>	<p><i>A large majority of students feel positive about the work because the tasks in most of our programs are relevant and engaging for our students.</i></p> <p><i>A minority of students may not see the impact of their work because some tasks may not feel relevant or authentic.</i></p>

Reviewing data in small groups: Round 1

 In the next activity, you will split into small groups to discuss your school's results. After you complete the **Reflect, Interpret, and Draw Conclusions** process with your Round 1 small group, you will split into new groups to share key takeaways about the process with others.



Small group discussion



Slides 43–46



15 minutes

In your Round 1 small group, select a question, with the related data presented as a table or graph, from your school's results to **Reflect** on. Once your group agrees on **Reflect** statement(s), move on to **Interpret** and **Draw Conclusions**.

Write down key points from your group's discussion in table 5 so you can share them with your new group in the next round.



This activity uses “jigsaw groups,” or groups that change partway through the activity, so participants can share highlights of what was discussed in their first group with their second group. The process for organizing the groups is described below. Also note that you may want to identify a small number of survey items, tables, or graphs for all the groups to review, rather than allow groups select from the full school-level report. This may save time and allow for more focused discussion.

In preparation for the “jigsaw” activity, first create a set of numbered cards that can be used to divide participants into groups. For example, if you have 12 participants, you could create three number “1” cards, three number “2” cards, three number “3” cards, and three number “4” cards. During the workshop, distribute the cards so participants with the same role have a card with the same number (for example, all the teachers have a number “1” card and all the students have a number “2” card). You may have more than one group of participants of the same role (for example, you might have two groups of teachers). For Round 1, group participants with *matching numbered cards* (that is, all participants with a number “1” card will be grouped together). We recommend starting with role-alike groups (that is, teachers with

teachers, students with students, etc.) in Round 1 to help participants, particularly students, feel more comfortable sharing their honest reflections and thoughts.


Each Round 2 group will include participants with *different numbered cards*, to combine the thinking of Round 1 groups and facilitate discussion across roles (such as, teachers with students, etc.).

To start Round 1, display the steps on slide 44 to guide the discussion. Use slide 45 to alert participants when five minutes remain, and then move to slide 46 explain how to switch groups for Round 2.

Table 5. Reflect, interpret, and draw conclusions based on school data – Round 1 small group discussion

Reflect	Interpret	Draw conclusions
<p><i>Example: About nine in 10 students reported that they strongly agree or agree that they see the impact of their tasks on themselves and others.</i></p>	<p><i>It seems that a large majority of students feel positive about their work.</i></p> <p><i>A minority of students may feel that some of their tasks are not as meaningful.</i></p>	<p><i>A large majority of students feel positive about the work because the tasks in most of our programs are relevant and engaging for our students.</i></p> <p><i>A minority of students may not see the impact of their work because some tasks may not feel relevant or authentic.</i></p>

Reviewing data in small groups: Round 2

 Once you form your Round 2 groups, discuss what you learned from reviewing the data and the conclusions you drew in your Round 1 groups. Use your notes from table 5 as you share.

- Each person shares what their group discussed during Round 1 (7 minutes).
- After each person has shared, discuss and take notes in response to the prompts in table 6 (8 minutes).



Once participants are engaged in Round 2 small group discussion, you can switch to slide 48, which provides discussion prompts that align with table 6. When participants finish the Round 2 discussion, ask them to stay with their Round 2 groups for the next activity.



Small group discussion



Slides 47–48



15 minutes

Table 6. Notes from Round 2 group discussion

Discussion question	Notes
What was similar about the conclusions drawn by each of our Round 1 groups?	
What was different about the conclusions drawn by each of our Round 1 groups?	
Were we confident in our conclusions, or are there additional questions we could ask to learn more?	

Deciding whether to gather additional information



Successful improvement efforts depend on consensus and buy-in about what most needs improving, but perspectives may differ on where or how an improvement effort should begin. Gathering information from all potential stakeholder groups (such as teachers, students, parents, and administrators) helps to build support for a school improvement effort that takes multiple views into account and meets a range of needs. However, if not all perspectives are well-represented in your survey results, you may want to gather more information.



Facilitator presentation
and small group discussion



Slides 49–51



10 minutes

You may have low survey response rates overall or only in some groups surveyed. For example, if less than 85 percent of people in a particular role (e.g., teachers, students) responded to the school culture survey, you might not be able to consider the results representative of the views of that group (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). Ideally, survey responses also reflect input from a high proportion of both teachers and students across all programs, as well as leader and counselor viewpoints.

If your school survey response rate was low, or if you are not confident about some of your conclusions, you may need to gather additional information to ensure your interpretation of survey data fairly reflects the views of all or nearly all in your school community.



In your Round 2 groups, refer back to your questions from the last row of table 6. Select one or two of those questions and enter them in the top left box in table 7. Then, generate some ideas about how you can gather additional information to answer them. Record the discussion in table 7 (5–7 minutes).

Before completing the activity in table 7, take a quick poll to assess whether participants think the survey results are representative. Ask participants for a show of hands: Do participants feel the survey results are representative of all stakeholder groups (for example, all teachers or all students, or all those in a given program)?

If a majority say “no,” the results are not representative of all stakeholder groups, then you should proceed through the rest of this discussion/activity as written.

If a majority say “yes,” they believe the results are representative and therefore they do not want to gather any additional information, you may skip to the last section of this workshop and preview Workshop 3 (page 27, slide 53). However, if time allows, you may find it useful to review table 7 and the suggested process for identifying additional information to gather.




Table 7 has space for participants to take notes on these questions and their plans to gather information on how to answer them. Be sure that participants include who will be responsible for the next steps, how they will gather the information, and how and by when they will share it with the rest of the improvement team. Note that focusing on one or two questions will help ensure the effort to gather additional information is feasible. Ideally, the additional information will be collected and shared before Workshop 3 to inform the group’s selection of improvement priorities.

Table 7. Notes for gathering additional information

Questions about survey findings	Where and how to find the answer	Who will take next steps and by when	How and by when to share what we learn
<i>Example: Do some students feel some tasks are less relevant and authentic?</i>	<i>Ask two students in each program at student leader meeting.</i>	<i>Susan will ask in the November meeting and take notes.</i>	<i>Susan will email what she learns to the group one week before Workshop 3.</i>
Note here what you learn			

Sharing information gathered before Workshop 3

 *Let's decide how we will share the information that members of each of the small groups will gather (for example, by email) and by when.*

When the members are ready to share the additional information with the whole group, please ask them to:

- *Remind the whole group of the question from table 7 they were trying to address by gathering the additional information.*
- *Share the information they gathered and how they gathered it.*
- *Explain how the information addresses the question from table 7.*
- *Explain whether the information changes or confirms the original conclusions from table 5.*

With answers to these questions, the group will be ready to identify an improvement priority in Workshop 3!



Whole group discussion



Slide 52



5 minutes

Looking ahead to Workshop 3



Thank you again for your ongoing engagement in this workshop series! Let's look ahead to the next workshop. In Workshop 3, we will:

- Identify and agree on a priority for school culture improvement.
- Learn how evidence-based practices support improvement efforts.
- Review evidence-based practices in *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*.



Facilitator presentation



Slides 53–55



3 minutes



Ask participants what questions they have, and answer any, before thanking them for participating. Remember to ask participants to share any feedback or constructive criticism in the spirit of modelling openness.

Workshop 3: Identify Priorities

Table 8. Detailed overview of Workshop 3

Preparing for Workshop 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If participants planned to gather additional information after Workshop 2, they should complete that process and share what they learned with the group before attending Workshop 3. If they had no work between meetings, they can proceed directly to Workshop 3. • The facilitator should prepare a handout or electronic document to summarize the conclusions drawn from the review of survey data and additional information gathered after Workshop 2.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and agree on a priority for school culture improvement. • Learn how evidence-based practices support improvement efforts. • Review evidence-based practices in <i>Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators</i>.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants' notes from Workshop 2 • Notes on conclusions (as relevant) drawn or confirmed between workshops • Workshop 3 activities and slides • Poster paper, dry-erase whiteboard, or shared document • Markers • Copies of or a link for the Educator Guide
Agenda and time required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total time = 1 hour 20 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review progress and look ahead (5 minutes) - Review conclusions from data review (5 minutes) - Identify possible improvement priorities (45 minutes) - Explore and use evidence-based practices (5 minutes) - Introduce <i>Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators</i> (15 minutes) - Where do we go from here? (5 minutes)

Welcome back: Review progress and look ahead



Welcome! Objectives for the third workshop are to:

- Identify and agree on a priority for school culture improvement.
- Learn how evidence-based practices support improvement efforts.
- Review evidence-based practices in *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*.



Facilitator presentation



Slides 56–59



5 minutes

But first, let's take a minute to celebrate your progress so far! You have completed the **review data** step and will **select priorities** for improvement in this workshop!



Review slides 58–59 to remind participants of the improvement cycle and where they are in the process. Encourage them to describe what they did in the *Review data* step and then explain that they are now ready to move to selecting priorities.

Review conclusions from data review



In groups of three to five, review the handout summarizing conclusions drawn from the survey data and the additional information gathered after Workshop 2. Consider which conclusions resonate with your experience and which, if any, surprise you (5 minutes).



Small group discussion



Slides 60–61




5 minutes



Before Workshop 3, prepare a handout or electronic document with the conclusions drawn from the review of survey data and from the additional information gathered (this information should derive from the small groups' tables 5 and 6, completed during Workshop 2, and the small groups' table 7, which they completed through additional data collection between Workshop 2 and 3). Ask participants to review these conclusions in small groups.

Identify possible improvement priorities

 In groups of three to five, use the conclusions summary handout and other notes from Workshop 2 to complete the sentences below. You can use each prompt more than once. Using your notes will help ensure statements are based on data (10 minutes).



Small group and whole group discussion



Slides 62–66



45 minutes

Be specific to focus your improvement ideas. For example, a statement such as “We have room to grow in our school culture” is not as useful as “We have room to grow in the way that we include student choice in our assignments.”

- **Strengths:** “It’s great that we already _____ so well.
We know this because _____.”
- **Areas for improvement:** “We have room to grow in _____.
We know this because _____.”

Share your sentences with the whole group to create a combined list of strengths and areas for improvement and discuss any trends you notice. You can take notes on the whole-group discussion in table 9 (15 minutes).




While groups share their statements, it may be helpful to document them where everyone can see (for example, using poster paper, a whiteboard, or an electronic shared document). You can begin to group similar priorities or priorities that address a common challenge to facilitate later discussions.

Listen carefully for whether these statements are specific enough to guide the upcoming improvement work, and prompt participants to add detail as needed.

Table 9. Notes on strengths and areas for improvement

Strengths and areas for improvement	
Strengths	
Areas for improvement	

Focusing the improvement work

 Next, we will need to select one or two priority areas for improvement to tackle first. When reviewing the list you generated in table 9, consider:

- **URGENCY:** You can work on some of these areas later. Are any more urgent than others?
- **SPECIFICITY:** Are the improvement areas described specifically enough that you can focus your efforts on them? If not, see if you can be more specific.
- **IMPACT:** Where is the biggest "bang for your buck," or where can you make the biggest difference with a small or medium effort?
- **TIME FRAME:** What could be a "quick win"? Where do you expect to see measurable improvement quickly? Do some priorities need to come before others in terms of the sequence of implementing changes?
- **FEASIBILITY:** Are any of the selected priorities more feasible, or easier, to address than others, for example, by using resources already available?

List the improvement areas in table 10 and work together to rate each consideration (10 minutes).

- 1 = High priority
- 2 = Medium priority
- 3 = Low priority



You will guide participants to narrow their focus (slides 64–65) and then brainstorm how to address the selected improvement priority (slide 66).


The goal is to develop consensus to select one or two areas for improvement as a school. If participants need to narrow the list of improvement areas they developed in table 9, the considerations and questions in this section can help them do so.

You should see agreement and enthusiasm for tackling the selected priority improvement area(s). This enthusiasm will help the improvement leaders commit to the process and serve as champions to engage others in the school community. If the group identifies many priorities and rates them similarly, remind participants that tackling too much at once is not feasible. Once the group agrees on one or two improvement priorities, document them so all can see.

Table 10. Considerations to determine high-priority improvement areas

Improvement area	Urgency	Specificity	Impact	Time frame	Feasibility

Discuss implications of selected priorities

 Does a clear priority improvement area emerge? Once you have populated table 10 with your ratings, discuss the ratings to select an area to address for the remainder of this workshop (10 minutes). If several areas received similar ratings, you may need to reconsider where to focus improvement efforts.

Making changes



 Now that you've selected an improvement priority, brainstorm potential changes you might make to address it and document your ideas in table 11. Note that some changes might involve a larger, and therefore less feasible, effort (for example, reviewing and revising tasks across programs), whereas some changes might be simpler and more feasible (for example, ensuring that leadership positions are distributed across programs and grades) (10 minutes).

Table 11. Notes from brainstorming session

Improvement priority	Possible changes that could address this improvement priority
Example	
Help all students feel their contributions matter.	Ensure that all tasks have rich opportunities for student input and leadership, and that their importance is clearly articulated so students know how each role contributes to supporting the Simulated Workplace.
	Share leadership positions and similar roles among students in different programs and grades.
Your ideas	

Explore and use evidence-based practices

Why does evidence matter?

 Now that you have identified your priority area of improvement and brainstormed some potential strategies related to that improvement area, how will you decide what course of action to take? How do you know what changes will make a difference? You want to know how well a

program or practice works, for whom and under what conditions, **before** you adopt it, **while** you are doing it, and **after** you finish it. Evidence is critical at all stages of improvement work, including in the process of selecting practices to implement.



Facilitator presentation




Slides 67–69



5 minutes

About evidence-based practices

 Evidence-based practices are those that have been studied, tested, and proven effective. Practices or programs with *strong evidence* or *moderate evidence* of success are more likely to improve outcomes than programs without such evidence, especially if they were researched in settings similar to yours.



Find more information about evidence-based practices in [Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments](#) from the U.S. Department of Education.

Introduction to *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators*



Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators (the Educator Guide) provides information about evidence-based practices you might use in your improvement work. The guide is available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/appalachia/blogs/pdf/simulated-workplace-culture-educator-guide-508.pdf>



Facilitator presentation and small group discussion



Slide 70–77



15 minutes



As you learn about how evidence-based practices can support your improvement work, and as you discuss the Educator Guide's evidence-based practices for Simulated Workplaces, consider the prompts below:

- Which practices from the Educator Guide are most relevant to the improvement priority you selected and the kinds of changes you brainstormed? Why do you find them relevant?
- If none of the practices seem relevant, how will you identify other evidence-based practices to address your improvement priority?
- If you are unable to find evidence-based practices relevant to the improvement priority, how will you decide which strategies or practices to implement?

Turn to your neighbor and share your thinking (5 minutes).



Present slides 70–77 to introduce the *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators* (Guide for Educators), a resource about evidence-based practices that WVDE and REL Appalachia jointly developed for Simulated Workplaces. You may want to focus on practices most relevant to the improvement priority the group identified. If none of the practices in the Guide feel relevant, you could search for others in the What Works Clearinghouse, <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>, or the Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research, <https://clear.dol.gov/>.

Where do we go from here?



Thank you again for your ongoing engagement in this workshop series! As we conclude Workshop 3, you have:

- Identified an improvement priority.
- Brainstormed types of change to help meet that improvement priority.
- Identified evidence-based practices to help achieve goals for change.



Facilitator presentation



Slides 78–80



5 minutes

You may need more support to do the following:

- Review the selected improvement focus.
- Plan for implementation and next steps.



This facilitator handbook has an appendix with supplemental materials to help your team take these next steps. The appendix includes an example improvement scenario, an action planning template, and links to other relevant resources.

Before thanking everyone for participating in the third workshop, do not forget to ask participants for any questions. Remember to ask participants to share any feedback/constructive criticism in the spirit of modelling positive culture.

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Appendix A: Scenario



This scenario describes the actions of an improvement team at fictional North West High School as an example to illustrate the process outlined in the three workshops. Appendix B also refers to this scenario as an example of how to use the planning template.

Introduction

North West High School, a comprehensive high school, is in its seventh year of implementing the Simulated Workplace program. The program has eight programs of study ranging from collision repair technology to graphic design.

Reviewing school culture survey data

The school recently received a report containing its own annual school culture survey data as well as statewide survey results. School leaders worked to ensure that nearly everyone—all students, teachers, counselors, and administrators—completed the survey so results would be representative of the full range of views in the school community. They were pleased that 90 percent of possible respondents completed the survey, which meant they could be fairly confident the results provided an accurate picture of attitudes in the Simulated Workplace program.

The principal decided to convene an improvement team of administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers to review and discuss the results, especially in light of recent school closures, remote learning, and other challenges the school community faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure that student voices contributed to the discussion, the principal also asked three student leaders, representing three different Simulated Workplace programs, to join the group as well.

The group met twice over the course of two weeks. During the first meeting, participants learned more about the school culture survey and the continuous improvement cycle that the school

would use to strengthen school culture (workshop 1). During the second meeting, educators and students reviewed the school and statewide survey data (workshop 2).

Participants identified several strengths and also noticed clear areas for improvement in the survey data. Specifically, participants noted that the responses to student engagement items were less positive than they had hoped (table A-1). More than half of student survey respondents did not feel their Simulated Workplace classes would help prepare them for future careers. Survey results reflected that teachers and administrators were aware of this issue, too. About a third of those respondents did not think students could make connections between the program and future workplace activities. Four in 10 teacher survey respondents did not think students understood the importance of their Simulated Workplace tasks.

Table A-1. Student engagement survey results

Student engagement		
Respondent	Survey items	Percentage who agreed or strongly agreed
Student	Simulated Workplace is more engaging than my traditional high school classes.	40 percent (n=180)
Student	I feel what I learn in my classes could be applied in current career opportunities within my field of study.	54 percent (n=180)
Student	I feel better prepared to enter the workforce.	52 percent (n=180)
Respondent	Survey items	Percentage who said always or often
Teacher	Students are able to make connections between Simulated Workplace and the real workplace.	60 percent (n=10)
Administrator		66 percent (n=3)
Teacher	Students understand the importance of activities completed in the classroom.	60 percent (n=10)

Some people on the improvement team were also concerned by the differences between teachers' and students' perspectives on the power students have in the classroom (table A-2). A large

proportion of students did not believe their input helped determine assignments and activities, whereas most teachers believed that student voice contributed to those decisions.

Table A-2. Student empowerment survey results

Student Empowerment		
Respondent	Survey items	Percentage who said always or often
Student	I have the opportunity to make important decisions.	60 percent (n=180)
Student	The instructor listens to student feedback to adjust our learning.	58 percent (n=180)
Student	I have the power to make a difference in how things are done.	64 percent (n=180)
Teacher	Students are able to decide how they want to learn.	80 percent (n=10)
Teacher	Students impact classroom management and daily activities.	70 percent (n=10)

Gathering additional information

Between workshops 2 and 3, the team wanted to understand more about the student views reflected in the survey. They convened two meetings with six students each. The twelve students represented all eight Simulated Workplace programs.

Consistent with the survey results, more than half the students in both meetings said their Simulated Workplace tasks did not always feel relevant to their future jobs. Some questioned how the tasks would help them get a job in their field. They did not feel there was a connection between what they were doing in the classroom and their future career goals. When asked if they felt like they could raise these concerns to teachers, the students said they doubted that raising these concerns would lead to changes. Students generally did not believe they had a voice in how their programs were run, but they were eager to contribute and take responsibility for more decisionmaking.

Some students in these meetings held more positive views. They believed their input did inform how activities and assignments were developed. They also viewed tasks as relevant and generally thought their programs would help prepare them for future careers in their fields. The improvement team learned that most students who held these positive views had informally connected with someone in the community who worked in their future profession. For example, a carpentry student shared that he had been mentored by a carpenter who was a leader in his 4-H group. These connections gave them a first-hand view of the relevance of the Simulated Workplace tasks they were assigned. The improvement team also gathered that these connections with professionals gave students additional confidence to contribute in class and lent credence to students' input in the eyes of teachers because the students' comments during class were grounded in authentic examples.



Identifying an improvement priority

With this additional information, the principal reconvened the improvement team to reflect on what they had learned. They discussed how students who felt they had a voice in how their classes were run felt more empowered and more engaged in the Simulated Workplace program. The team agreed that when students contributed to the design of some tasks, they found the work more rewarding and more relevant. They also agreed that these positive views were more common among students who had connected with a professional in the community.

Based on this discussion, the team decided their improvement priority was to find a way to help students more systematically make such community connections.



Selecting a relevant evidence-based practice

After selecting their improvement priority, the group reviewed the *Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators* to learn more about evidence-based practices that could be used in the school's improvement work. Participants referred to the summary boxes in the *Guide* to identify practices that addressed student engagement (project-based learning, frameworks for authentic questioning, career-focused mentoring for students, and individualized career planning).

Among these practices, career-focused mentoring stood out as closely related to the team's interest. The Simulated Workplace already had relationships with several local industry partners. Some partners had visited as speakers or to conduct onsite business reviews, offering insights into current business trends and sought-after certifications. Participants thought they could use this foundation to build a pilot mentoring program that could then be expanded.

The next step for the North West High School team will be to plan how to implement the pilot mentoring program and how to assess its success. Appendix B includes an action planning template with examples from this scenario and a blank action planning template you can use with your own team. Appendix C links to additional resources that can support your team's future planning, implementation, and continuous improvement efforts.

Appendix B: Action Planning Template



This planning template can help you identify the necessary steps to implement the practice you chose to address your improvement priority. The template prompts you to indicate who is responsible for each step, identify resources needed for implementation, create a timeline, and select measures of success. You might not complete the whole template in one meeting. Rather, you can consider it a living document that can be added to and amended over time.

Prior to filling in the template, identify a team to work on planning and implementation. In the the scenario (appendix A), the improvement team at North West High School selected a smaller team of four—an assistant principal, a teacher, and two student leaders—to plan and initiate the career mentoring program.

About the action planning template

The template includes the following sections:

- **Priority:** State the selected improvement priority to help keep the team focused.
- **Practice:** Indicate the specific practice the team has selected to implement. In the scenario (appendix A), the team selected career-focused mentoring.
- **Action Steps:** List all the steps needed to implement the practice selected. If you selected a practice from the *Educator Guide*, you can review the recommended next steps to further explore the practice, implement it, and continuously assess and improve implementation. Your team may need to learn more about the selected practice before determining what action steps will be needed. Steps can be added to the template over time.
- **Responsible Parties:** Identify who will take responsibility for each step, including who will lead and who will provide support.
- **Resources:** List the resources needed for each action step. Take a broad view to consider financial support, meeting space, staff and student time both during and outside of the

school day, and time from external stakeholders—in the appendix A scenario, for example, the mentors.

- **Communication Needed:** Decide who needs to be consulted for each action step and who needs to be kept informed about progress on each action. In the scenario (appendix A), members of the improvement team will need to contact businesses in the community to recruit potential mentors for the career-focused mentoring program.
- **Due:** Identify the start and end dates for each action step and important interim milestones.
- **Measures of Success:** Identify measures of success for each action step so you can monitor progress as your work proceeds. Measures of success can range from merely completing a task (such as finding information on three related programs and presenting that information to the larger planning group) to hitting a progress target (such as connecting 90 percent of students in three programs with mentors at the pilot stage).
- **Data:** List all the data you will need to collect to assess implementation. In the scenario, the school might administer a survey to gauge the satisfaction of mentors and mentees and assess changes in students' views on the relevance of their Simulated Workplace tasks.

The action planning template sample below has just a few of the steps the fictional team at North West High School plans to undertake for a career-focused mentoring program as examples. The end of this appendix has a blank template for you to use as you implement the practice you selected to address your improvement priority.

Action planning template sample: Strengthening Simulated Workplace culture

Priority: Improve student engagement/empowerment by strengthening community connections

Practice: Career-focused mentoring

Action step	Responsible parties	Resources	Communications needed	Due	Measures of success	Data
What do you need to do to implement the practice?	Who will lead the task and provide support?	What do you need to complete this step?	Who do you need to reach out to and/or keep informed?	When should this step be completed?	How will you know you have made progress on this step?	What data will you use to measure progress?
-Learn about career-focused mentoring programs in other Simulated Workplaces. How have others done it?	-Assistant principal and teacher	-Staff time -Contacts at other schools who have implemented career-focused mentoring programs -Written materials on effective programs	-Other schools to learn about what they are doing -Internal team communication to share status update	-Three weeks to gather information -Send update email within four weeks	-Identify at least three example mentorship programs -Share clear, timely update email	-Successful completion of items in <i>Measures of Success</i> column (list of three identified programs and update email)
-Discuss what you learned about career-focused mentoring programs and identify relevant elements to include in your own program	-Entire improvement team	-Staff and student time -Conference room/classroom space	-Internal team discussion, no external communication	-Meet twice in two weeks	-Complete draft outline for career-focused mentoring pilot	-Poll of team members to assess extent to which members agree with draft outline

Action step	Responsible parties	Resources	Communications needed	Due	Measures of success	Data
What do you need to do to implement the practice?	Who will lead the task and provide support?	What do you need to complete this step?	Who do you need to reach out to and/or keep informed?	When should this step be completed?	How will you know you have made progress on this step?	What data will you use to measure progress?
-Contact businesses to identify potential mentors	-Selected Simulated Workplace students and teachers	-Staff and student time -Leader and staff connections with contacts at businesses who may be interested -Transportation (if visiting businesses)	-Relevant businesses (for outreach) -Individuals identified as potential mentors (for follow up) -Internal team communication to share status update	-Two weeks for outreach and follow-up -Send update email within three weeks	-Contact entire list of potential mentor organizations and document responses -Identify target number of mentors per Simulated Workplace program	-Shared document with a list of businesses and volunteer organizations, noting contacts, interest, and potential mentors
-Assess students' satisfaction with new mentors by developing and using a questionnaire	-Assistant principal and teacher	-Staff and student time	-Request that students take questionnaire, follow up to ensure high-response rate -Internal team communication to share results	-Every quarter in pilot phase	-Questionnaire results and mentor input reflect positive views of program -School culture survey results related to student engagement and empowerment improve one year after start of mentor program	-Questionnaire results -School culture survey results

Action planning template: Strengthening Simulated Workplace culture

Priority:

Practice:

Action step	Responsible parties	Resources	Communications needed	Due	Measures of success	Data
What do you need to do to implement the practice?	Who will lead the task and provide support?	What do you need to complete this step?	Who do you need to reach out to and/or keep informed?	When should this step be completed?	How will you know you have made progress on this step?	What data will you use to measure progress?

Action step	Responsible parties	Resources	Communications needed	Due	Measures of success	Data
What do you need to do to implement the practice?	Who will lead the task and provide support?	What do you need to complete this step?	Who do you need to reach out to and/or keep informed?	When should this step be completed?	How will you know you have made progress on this step?	What data will you use to measure progress?

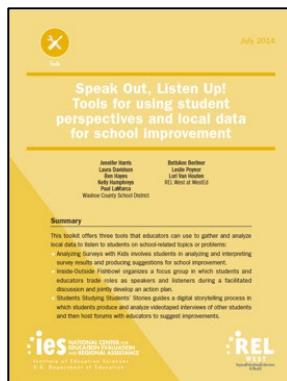
Appendix C: Additional Resources



After completing the three workshops, your team may be ready to implement a new practice. Below are some additional resources that can help you collect and use additional data to make decisions; identify relevant evidence-based practices; and engage in a systematic continuous improvement process in which your team implements a new practice, collects and reviews implementation data, and makes decisions about whether to adapt, adopt, or abandon the practice.

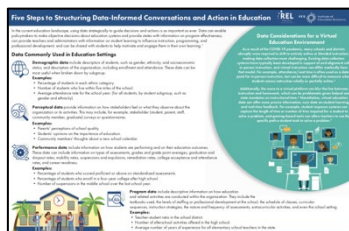
Data collection and use

Speak Out, Listen Up! Tools for Using Student Perspectives and Local Data for School Improvement



This toolkit provides three tools educators can use to gather data from students and engage them in a continuous improvement cycle. The tools include step-by-step directions for involving students in analyzing and interpreting survey results, conducting student focus groups, and producing and analyzing video-recorded interviews of students.

Five Steps to Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education



This guide reviews five key steps for using data for informed decisionmaking and strategic action: setting the stage, examining the data, understanding the findings, developing an action plan, and monitoring progress and measuring success.

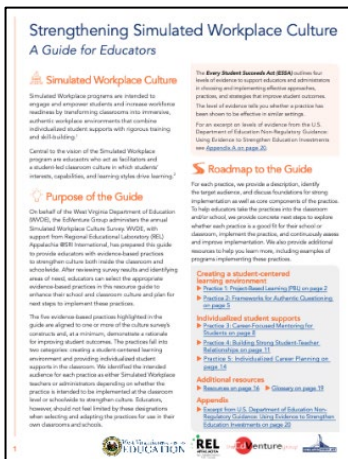
An Educator's Guide to Questionnaire Development



This guide describes a five-step survey development process: determining the goals of the questionnaire, defining the information needed, writing the questions, reviewing the questionnaire for alignment with the goals and with research-based guidance for writing questions, and organizing and formatting the questionnaire. This resource may be useful if your team decides to gather more information beyond what the school culture survey provides.

Identifying evidence-based practices

Strengthening Simulated Workplace Culture: A Guide for Educators



The West Virginia Department of Education and REL Appalachia jointly developed this resource for Simulated Workplaces (referenced in workshop 3). It provides information about five evidence-based practices you might use in your improvement work: project-based learning, frameworks for authentic questioning, career-focused mentoring for students, building strong student-teacher relationships, and individualized career planning. The guide has a brief definition of each practice and presents research findings on how the practice supports stronger school culture.

What Works Clearinghouse



The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reviews research on various programs, products, practices, and policies in education and summarizes these findings both in intervention reports, which present results of the highest-quality research, and in practice guides, which have evidence-based recommendations for educators based on research, practitioner experience, and expert opinion.

The following WWC resources may be relevant for Simulated Workplace programs:



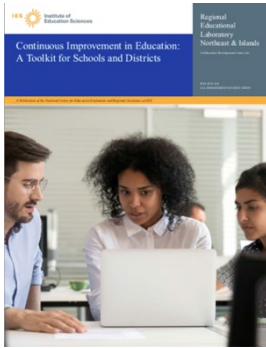
(1) Intervention report: [Career Academies](#), a school-within-school program operating in high schools. Students in Career Academies take both career-related and academic courses and acquire work experience through partnerships with local employers.



(2) Practice guide: [Designing and Delivering Career Pathways at Community Colleges](#). The guide focuses on promising career pathways interventions and makes five recommendations for supporting occupational skills training through these pathways.

Continuous improvement

Continuous Improvement in Education: A Toolkit for Schools and Districts



This comprehensive toolkit is designed to help educators in districts and schools engage in continuous improvement. It gives an overview of continuous improvement and focuses on plan-do-study-act cycles. It has tools and resources educators can use to implement continuous improvement efforts in their schools, districts, or agencies. [This graphic](#) illustrates the plan-do-study-act cycle introduced and supported in this toolkit.

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