

Dr. Bonnie Botel-Sheppard's (PLN Executive Director's) reflection:

I find it exciting that many administrators are experiencing PLN courses with teachers across our program sites including trying out course strategies with their students.

Jim Meredith's journal is an inspiration as he reflects on the implementation of a new literacy activity that enhances his teaching and his students' learning:

Mr. Jim Meredith  
Principal  
Archbishop Ryan High School  
Philadelphia, PA  
2014-15 PLN 5 course

In my PLN class, I tried out the Ten Percent Summary twice since the John Collins PLN Winter Symposium. Teaching AP United States Government and Politics to sophomores, I had previously tried summary writing framed as "Summarize and Respond." Since I was increasingly dissatisfied with the output, the Collins approach provided the perfect opportunity for a reset. I presented the reset as that I was unhappy with my approach, not with their work. After completing the Ten Percent Summary, the students provided feedback on an exit ticket. Out of forty-nine students, forty-eight expressed positive feedback about the experience. The anonymity provided comfort and no one had any reason to lie. Also, the ticket asked students to ask questions, which allowed me to redirect at the next class before the summary was finished. Overall the experience was so positive that both the class and I looked forward to having a second run of it.

The reset of the assignment was a powerful moment for me professionally. With this new approach, I abandoned a method that I used for twelve years. It is not easy to let something go that has been part of the toolbox for a dozen school

years. Although it was not easy, it was invigorating. Every year I tweak the course, however, I rarely make a wholesale switch. This switch was student-centered and ended up helping my class. I am thrilled that it happened and I look forward to more changes.

During the Ten Percent Summary, I used the Ten Percent Summary Sheet from the Collins website. While working on the sheet, students worked in tandem. Sharing their product with each other activated the Social Lens of Learning. The Human Lens of Learning was evident when they expressed their feelings about the assignment. This opportunity also gave them confidence as they expressed themselves in a smaller (more intimate) setting.