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| Speaker 1: | [inaudible] |
| [00:00:30]  Speaker 2:  [00:01:00] | Spelling questions running in the back. Um, last week we were at Grayson school problems, Montessori in the middle, pretending it was Jefferson County. So it was trying to frame shots so that it didn't look too like a middle school, middle school, private, you know, basis. So, all right. So where I want to start, don't worry about saying anything in particular, but I really just want you to tell me about your PLC. So tell me, tell me about how PLCs work, how your PLC works here in the civics ninth grade. So maybe start with the PLCs just generally. Yeah, I think about it for a second. Think about that question. |
| Speaker 1: | [inaudible] |
| [00:01:30]  Speaker 2: | Okay. Whenever, whenever you're ready. Tell me about PLCs here at Woodford. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:02:00]  [00:02:30] | So the PLCs here at Woodford County high school are very intentional. Um, if I could think of one word to describe them, it would be intentional not to say that there aren't times where it's informal and, you know, I communicate with my PLC during a passing period, and those are sometimes some of the most important interactions. However, at Woodford County high school, our administrators are very intentional about giving us the time and space and guidelines to have conversations with our PLCs surrounding things like planning, surrounding things like response to student, um, scores and student data. And that's so important because having that time valued allows us to have those conversations and not get our planning period, you know, taken with some kind of other meeting. Um, but yeah, so our PLCs are really structured around students. And from there, then we look at what our students are doing and what they need, and that's how we guide our planning. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:03:00] | And so in my PLC with civics, that's been very helpful, um, in my PLC here with Daylen and Sarah, we, we all are fairly new to teaching and it's really awesome because even though we are fairly new, we have support from our department and our administrators. And we also are all very receptive and willing to be vulnerable and have conversations and say things like, Hey, this didn't work in my classroom. I think I might've messed this up. How did you do it? How can I make this better? And especially with inquiry, um, that's been very helpful because we're all learning, but we're learning together. So, yeah. That's good. Yeah. So, um, I'd love you to answer this question by saying about what sort of, uh, sort of background on that POC. So, so tell me what, what does PLC stand for? So PLC stands for professional learning community. |
| [00:03:30]  Speaker 3:  [00:04:00] | Okay. And how does that, how do PLCs work here at Woodford PLCs here at Woodford work? We usually have scheduled PLC meetings every week, and those are times where, and it may depend, it may differ what we're talking about. Um, but those depend on where we're at kind of in our PLC cycle, we call it and that might be, did we just give a formative assessment of some sort? And are we going to discuss that and how it went in our classroom? Did we give some sort of summative assessment? Are we going to discuss that? Are we creating a summative assessment? Um, and so we actually have a schoolwide form that we, in our PLCs, it guides our conversation. And like I said, we may all be at different places like the civics PLC, maybe at a different pace than the U S history PLC, but we all follow those same steps and part of that PLC process. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:04:30]  [00:05:00] | So we go through setting our learning intentions and then from there we go through creating assessments and then from there we go through building instruction day-to-day instruction, so. Okay, great. Alright, so I'm gonna have you re say that. Okay. Um, and what I want you to say is, um, I want you to tell me, I want you to start by PLC stand for, and it gives you sort of blinds, right? Okay. You can repeat them however you want and whatever organic. So you don't have to memorize these, but this is essentially what I want you to do. Um, you know, PLC stands for professional learning communities here at Woodford. They are central to conversations that happen in the social studies department. In my particular appeal, C we work with ninth grade students taking civics, the course, you know, social studies course civics. And then you can talk about what your PLC does. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:05:30] | Okay. You know, what it's made up up. Does that make sense? Like PLCs are. Yeah. And then here at one from mom and she has no knowledge of a pizza see is she's never been Woodford. Okay. You know? Alright, give me a sort of one Oh one PLC, one Oh one, or you're talking to, you know, uh, governor Bashir who sort of is a Jew, knows that there are schools that exist, but doesn't understand what it see is okay. Okay. So whenever you're ready. So PLCs, I'll give you your first line. Um, so PLC stands for professional learning community and it's central to what we do here at Woodford |
| Speaker 2: | County high school. |
| [00:06:00]  Speaker 4: | Okay. I'm thinking. |
| Speaker 3: | So then from there central to what we do here at Woodford County high school, in my specific PLC, we work with civics and they're 10th graders and 10th graders. Right. And then, |
| Speaker 2: | Okay. And so in our job is to meet every other week or once a week, like bring it down. Don't think you're talking to me, pretend you're talking to him off. Alright. Okay. And I'll try not to act grace. |
| [00:06:30]  Speaker 3:  [00:07:00]  [00:07:30] | Okay. Professional learning communities or, Oh shoot. Okay. PLCs are professional learning communities and they are central to building instruction and to collaborating here at Woodford County high school in my PLC here at Woodford County high school, I teach civics. So I'm in a PLC of other civics teachers and we focus on 10th graders because that's, those are the students who are taking civics. And in our PLC with civics, we really, we meet once a week and we have guided forms that we are given from administrators. So they're uniform throughout the school. Um, and we get to have conversations about what we're doing in our classroom. We get to have conversations about and create ways that we're going to test our students or assess our students. Um, and we get to talk about how things went in our classroom and then go from there and help each other to maybe make things, um, more effective that we're doing in our classroom. That may be another teacher in my PLC is doing better at perfect. |
| Speaker 2: | Here we go. Maybe transition. Right. Okay. That's good. That was good. Okay. Absolutely perfect. Okay, cool. Um, so now I want you to tell me, what is the value of your PLC? Tell me about the value. |
| Speaker 4: | Okay. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:08:00]  [00:08:30] | The value of my civics PLC here at Woodford with Sarah and Galen is being able to be vulnerable. Um, we are all fairly new teachers and it's really helpful to have a safe space that is guided, you know, and sometimes it's, we don't know where to start a conversation, but from administrators, we're given those guiding questions of, Hey, this is where you're at. You should start talking about this, or you should look at your student data. Um, and having those cues lets us be really vulnerable in our conversations, even though we are all learning. Um, and I think because we're all still learning, we all are very open and willing to say, Hey, I messed up or Hey, I need to do better at this. And then we can all kind of feed from each other. So I think that's the biggest, um, positive that I've taken away from my civics PLC in the last few years. Right. |
| Speaker 2: | So tell me, um, tell me about how the PLC has helped you get better at inquiry. |
| [00:09:00]  Speaker 3:  [00:09:30] | The POC that I'm in has helped me to get better at implementing inquiry in my classroom. Because even when let's say from the C3, maybe there's an inquiry that's already been built. Um, and we pull the sources and, and, you know, there are set tasks, but being with other colleagues who are implementing those same inquiries, we can kind of modify those tasks. And so what I've found is working in a PLC, we're able to figure out, okay, we might use the same sources, but Ooh, I'm going to try this task. Maybe it's going to be more individual and you're going to try it, having your students work in groups and see how that differs and then see what went better. And then maybe I'll try groups next time. Um, so that's what I've found has been most helpful in terms of implementing inquiry in my classroom is having other people who are doing the same thing, um, to be able to kind of modify it and then see which works better. |
| Speaker 5: | Great. So tell me a little bit about this past year and how your PLC you'll appreciate it. |
| [00:10:00]  Speaker 2: | Yes. I got concealer on my eyelashes. I never wear mascara. I hit the eyelashes. I was like, now that I'm not used to having it on, so totally so much at night. Um, um, I can never tell that around most days then just around this, you just can't appreciate that story. So, alright. So tell me, |
| [00:10:30]  Speaker 5: | Tell me a little bit about this past year with inquiry and sort of ramping up inquiry in your PLC. Like what are the things that you all decided at the beginning of the year? How did you change that up? You know, what did you learn to sort of give me a lay of the land of how inquiry and PLC sort of went together for you all this year? |
| Speaker 3:  [00:11:00]  [00:11:30] | So this year we really work together on inquiry in our PLC because we had new standards passed last summer and those standards included inquiry. And so for the first time it was explicitly, Hey, we should be doing this. Um, which was awesome. We had already been doing it in the past, but now we had, you know, this, this guidance. And so in our PLC, we made, we set a goal and some teachers in my PLC were newer to inquiry. Um, and so we set a goal of, Hey, we're going to implement this many inquiries per semester. And so we set those goals, but then from there, once we implemented back in, I want to say September, we implemented a PLC wide inquiry that we all did the same one, so that we could have a common assessment with our students. And once we did that, we then wanted to implement more. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:12:00]  [00:12:30] | And so it was nice to have a PLC there to have those conversations. And then from there we started implementing even just pieces of inquiry in our classroom. Um, and so that helped us to learn that, you know, we can make inquiry work for our students. Um, and you know, I had, we all teach different sections of civics. Um, some of us teach, you know, um, on grade level civics, some of us teach advanced civics, um, and we were able to modify inquiry to then fit our classrooms. Um, and then we were able to, because we set those goals, come back and have those conversations. And outside of our PLC, we set department goals as well. So then we got to come together as a department and talk about how inquiry was going. Um, and when we did that, we even have, you know, people like Ryan Lewis, who has been implementing inquiry for much longer and teaching for much longer. And so we were able to get feedback from him |
| Speaker 5:  [00:13:00] | As well. So that's awesome. Um, so maybe tell me a little bit, well, I want you to pretend that you were giving advice to another teacher in a different school district and they, their PLC wanted to get started with inquiry. What kind of advice would you give them? Which where's the starting place and how, you know, where should they go from there? And you could even start with, if I, if I were going to give anyone advice and you can make a joke about, look, I'm three years in, so I shouldn't be doing any advice, but if I were that's fine, this is why it would be, yeah. Okay. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:13:30] | If I were to give anyone who's new to inquiry and new to implementing inquiry advice on how to implement it, um, which I'm only in my third bout to be in my third year teaching. So I'm still new to it. But if I were to give advice, I would say, just do something, just start, and then you'll learn from there what your students need and what you need, because we're all different. We all have different ways of teaching. And, um, if you just try it, then you'll learn what you need to do to make it work for your students. But if you just look at it and you never actually implement it, you're not going to know. Um, so it's hard to say, Hey, try this, do this, just try it. Um, and then go from there. |
| [00:14:00]  Speaker 5: | All right, good. Um, let me look at my notes here. Um, let's see where I'm at. Alright, so |
| Speaker 4: | [inaudible] |
| Speaker 5:  [00:14:30] | Okay. So what I want you to do is say something like to be successful at inquiry. You need colleagues, you know, I'm lucky enough to have a PLC where, you know, we just have a really good relationship. So I want you to explore that just a little more, say it maybe in a different way. Okay. Start with, to be successful in inquiry, you need colleagues, okay. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:15:00]  [00:15:30] | To be successful at inquiry, you need colleagues. You need colleagues who are willing to try new things. You need colleagues who are willing to, um, take feedback and who are willing to give you feedback. And, um, that's been really important. Having a PLC has been really important to inquiry, um, because of those conversations that are had. Um, and then even outside of that, you need colleagues in your whole department that maybe are teaching different content who have experience. You need administrators who understand that you're trying something new in your classroom. Um, and that it's not going to look like maybe traditional instruction that has, that you've been doing or that other teachers have been doing. And you need administrators who are willing to let you try that in your classroom. Um, let you take risks. Maybe it's gonna, you're gonna mess up the first time. Um, but administrators and colleagues who are willing to, um, be forgiving and help you grow, um, because without being vulnerable, you're not going to grow and you're not going to learn what you need to do to improve the instruction for your students. |
| Speaker 5:  [00:16:00] | That's great. So the last time we interviewed you, you talked about the importance, we in chapter one with this, which is you do this really great job talking about how important collaboration is in inquiry. And you talk about collaboration between your students. Now, I want you to talk about collaboration between colleagues and you've said a bunch of it so far. I just want you to say it again and maybe in a slightly different way, just because, so, um, how important is collaboration, um, you know, to sort of your professional growth |
| Speaker 3:  [00:16:30]  [00:17:00] | Collaboration is so important. It is everything in terms of professional growth, especially being a new teacher, but even for teachers I know who have been doing it for awhile, um, being able to collaborate and being open to taking feedback and suggestions, um, and realizing that I'm not an expert in one, like maybe in one topic, I'm not an expert. And in one topic, I need to learn more. And maybe someone in my department is an expert in that topic. And so collaboration has been everything. And that's where I've been so lucky here at Woodford County high school to have colleagues who let me be vulnerable, um, and who are willing to collaborate with me and even take ideas from me, even though I'm a new teacher. Um, and so collaboration has been everything to my personal growth as in professional growth as a teacher. |
| Speaker 5:  [00:17:30]  [00:18:00] | Okay, great. So that's a good high level answer. I want you to get even more specific. So what are the kinds of, we can just brainstorm this together, you know, what are the kinds of ways that teachers collaborate? They collaborate in terms of hallway conversations in terms of you've pointed out feedback. Um, but even just sitting down, I would imagine, and talking about a source and how to make it accessible for students, or to adapt an inquiry or to problem solve a bad day. I'm going to post more to, you know, so maybe you could articulate maybe three to four ways specifically, you know, or if you want to tell a story, that's fine too. You know, I implemented this inquiry last year where I was able to pull on Ryan new's mature experience to help me think through the compelling question or, you know, I don't know. Um, but all of that is to say, you know, collaboration with some split specificity, but how is collaboration helpful to inquiry? |
| Speaker 4: | Okay. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:18:30]  [00:19:00] | Collaboration is crucial for, um, professional growth and for implementing inquiry. And it looks so different. Um, collaboration can look like a formal meeting. It can look like a conversation at lunch and it can be surrounding things like sources or things like how my day's going, or maybe a behavior problem that I had in my class. And I don't know how to solve it. Um, and having that collaboration with many diverse teachers helps to provide resources for me and help me grow. For example, we have a teacher in our department, um, who she is constantly looking for new professional development. And a lot of times those are surrounding sources and multimedia sources. And she is even this summer. Um, last summer she was sending, she went to multiple PDs and she would send links to our department, just, Hey, I found this. Um, and then I was able to try those in my classroom. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:19:30]  [00:20:00] | And then even things like struggling, we had in our PLC, um, with assessment, we were struggling and students were not producing assessment material to our expectations. And we were able to pull in a us history teacher to come sit in our PLC. We told her what was going on. And she just said, well, I've been there before. Here's what I did. Here's what I tried. Um, and then sometimes it even just looks like something just happened. That was in my class, that was out of my control. And during the passing period, I opened the door and I look at my colleague across the hallway and I'm like, listen, what just happened? I need your help. And, um, that's how I grow. And that's how teachers grow is by, you know, we, we study what happens in schools. We study before we start teaching, um, ways to instruct students. And, but really when you're in it, and then you can have those conversations with your colleagues, that's when you grow and you learn, um, how to improve your teaching. So |
| Speaker 5:  [00:20:30] | I agree with that. I think collaboration and having regional empowerment is critical to teaching because teaching is a vulnerable act. It's, you know, you're taking a lot of risk. And so you need people that are gonna reinforce the things that you do well, and be honest with you and help you debrief with things that just don't go well. What do you think, what do you think is unique about inquiry? That, that if, if collaboration is essential to teaching, it feels like collaboration is even more critical to inquiry. What is it about inquiry that makes you a sort of even more vulnerable, um, and require collaboration? |
| [00:21:00]  Speaker 1: | And you may not agree with that? No, I do. Yeah. I do. Trying to think how to put it in words. |
| Speaker 5: | So is there something unique about inquiry that makes collaboration |
| Speaker 1: | Critical? I think, okay. |
| [00:21:30]  Speaker 3:  [00:22:00]  [00:22:30] | Inquiry is very unique in that it puts a lot of responsibility on students. And so, and they're not necessarily used to that. They're not used to creating questions or they're not used to taking a question and then moving forward with a task with me, just kind of there for support if they need it, but letting them go with it. And so having to let go of that control and trusting that students are going to, or having them learn how to be comfortable with that, um, it takes vulnerability. And so then you have to be able to collaborate and to be able to go and talk to your colleagues about how it's going, um, and know that you're not alone. And that if students aren't moving forward as quickly with, um, implementing inquiry, as you would like that that might be the same case in someone else's classroom, but maybe it just took some time. And so you need that reassurance, um, from colleagues to know that it's going to take time, but to know that, um, you just have to give up that control and that's not easy, but knowing that other people are giving up control and other teachers are giving up control in their classrooms, it just lets you know, that it's going to be okay. Um, so I think that's why collaboration, especially for me, has been crucial to implementing inquiry. |
| Speaker 5:  [00:23:00] | That's great. That's good. Yeah. Hope I didn't talk over her. Um, uh, okay. I think we nailed that. Um, so I want you, I want to talk to you a little bit, so I want to expand beyond the PLC and you've already done that. I heard you talk about that. Um, but I want you to talk a little bit about having senior colleagues. Um, you know, you talked about how to young colleagues in your, in your PLC, I'm trying to draw a through line between you and sort of Ryan Lewis, who he is. And so, um, maybe you could talk a little bit about being mentored by senior colleagues in the department and what that looks like and what's most valuable or |
| [00:23:30]  Speaker 1: | Yeah. Okay. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:24:00]  [00:24:30]  [00:25:00] | Having colleagues who have been teaching for a lot longer than I have, has been so helpful and so important. Um, what comes to mind is Ryan Lewis. Um, anytime something happens in my classroom that I didn't expect, or I've just never seen before, um, I'll come to him and I'll tell him, and like his face just doesn't even change. He's like unfazed because he's seen more than I've seen. Um, and so having that, having teachers who have been through and implemented the things that you're trying in your classroom, um, and who you can go to, and they're not going to act like it's the end of the world, like I might be panicking. Um, that's been so helpful, um, because they're able to say, Hey, this happened before. And here's what, here's what I did to make it better. Um, and so having colleagues instructionally who have done things that you're trying in your classroom is so important. Um, specifically with inquiry, I have relied on my senior colleagues a lot, um, to just understand what inquiry looks like when I was new to actually implementing it in my classroom. Um, I wanted to see what that looked like. And so I was able to go down the hall to a teacher in my department and see, um, how he implements it and then I could start from there and then make it work to how I, um, my style of teaching. So, yeah, |
| Speaker 5:  [00:25:30] | Yeah. I remember I was in my second week of teaching and I was teaching it in Seoul foreign school in Korea, this really fancy international school. And I think, you know, I was meant to be a teacher and I thought one day I'd finished a day of teaching. And I thought that, you know, there was going to be a movie made one day, you know, sitting outside and just sort of basking in my awesome ness after the teacher and the senior teacher came up and sat next to me and he's like, how's it going, Kathy? And I said, it was just an amazing day. I feel like I'm really good at this. And he said, you know, I don't really think you can be a master teacher until you've taught at least five years. And I remember going what an asshole, |
| Speaker 3: | What happened. |
| Speaker 5:  [00:26:00]  [00:26:30] | That was amazing. And then 10 years in, I understood what he was saying. That there's something unique about the wisdom that comes from just doing something over a period of time and sort of maturing your practice. So I want you to talk, that's a whole way of saying that when I interview you, I get this energy and excitement, and I know that you were meant to be a teacher. When I talk with Ryan Lewis, I get that same. I sort of know that he also was meant to be a teacher, but he's just been in it for a lot longer. And I wonder if you could talk a bit about Ryan Lewis and tell me what specifically sort of makes him a great sort of mentor. What w w w what does he do really well around inquiry? You just know you're in the presence of somebody who |
| Speaker 3:  [00:27:00]  [00:27:30] | Has the deep roots. Yeah. Okay. So I can just, can I start by just saying like in Louis plank? Okay. Okay. Um, I am very lucky to have a teacher, my department, like Ryan Lewis, um, who has so much experience with implementing inquiry in his classroom. I've had students, um, in an elective who have had Brian at the same time as they have me, and they've even commented on how, um, Oh, miss AMRO. I just came from mr. Lewis's class and my brain hurts. And I'm like, why? And they're like, he's really making us think. Um, and that's just, that's awesome. And it made me just want to run down here and sit and watch Ryan teach, um, because he's really good at, and I think every student will say this he's really good at putting the thinking on students and putting the work on students, but being there to support them, um, and the students enjoy it. Um, and so that's something that I am working on learning from him. Um, |
| Speaker 2: | Yeah. Yeah. Good, good, good. Um, great. |
| Speaker 3: | So tell me a little bit about, um, |
| [00:28:00]  Speaker 2: | Woodford as a nurturing place for a young sort of ambitious teacher. What makes Woodford great place? |
| Speaker 3:  [00:28:30]  [00:29:00] | Okay. I couldn't get you out of it. Yeah. Big money job. Um, Hm. A lot of things. Okay. Woodford County high school is such a wonderful place, especially for a young teacher. Um, the support is just, I can't even put it into words from administrators, other teachers, teachers outside of my department. Um, from day one I had, even from the students, I had people coming to me saying, hi, ms. AMRO, you're new here. Um, I teach this or I'm a student and I'm a sophomore. Please let me know if you need anything. And it was genuine. Um, and I knew that people meant it because when I did need things, they were there for me and they followed through. I remember something as simple as we, um, the first semester teaching here for new teachers, the administrators have meetings every month for the new teachers. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:29:30] | And all it was was we just sat in a circle and they literally went around and said, what does each of you need from us? Is there anything you need from us? And we just went around and how is it going? How's teaching going? And I remember one of the meetings, I said, I need tables. I want tables in my classroom because I like having students collaborate. Um, and I want tables and I can't find them. And my administrators were like, okay, we'll get on it. And just things like, as simple as that, um, and I got tables in my classroom. And so just seeing that, no matter what happens in your classroom, because you're new and because you're still learning. And I think that that continues for years, um, knowing that your administrators, your colleagues are going to support you no matter what. And having them actually show you that. |
| [00:30:00]  Speaker 3:  [00:30:30] | Um, so that's been really important. And then just the students here, I mean, like I said, my first year teaching, I had a senior advisory, so like a senior homeroom. And so they had all been here longer than I had, and they could, it could have gone a completely different way. You know, they knew I was new and, um, they were so helpful. They were so supportive. Um, anytime I was wondering where something was or who to contact for a certain issue, they would tell me and they would help me and they would come check on me. Um, so it's really just this sense of community in the sense of support, um, that teachers, students, administrators, everyone feels. Um, and so it's been very nurturing for me. Um, and it's made me never want to leave. So I'm very lucky. |
| Speaker 4: | Yeah. Yeah. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:31:00] | Alright. I'm gonna, um, I'm gonna have you talk about, I haven't defined, like, pretend you're talking to my mom again. Okay. And she's like summer, what's this inquiry thing that my daughter does. I don't even understand it. She told me like 10 times or a thousand and I still don't get it. What's inquiry. What does that mean? What is my mom? What is my daughter? Okay. Try and explain to me what inquiry. Okay. Like specifically general, and then you can get specific. Okay. You can start specific and get general. Okay. Alright. Even walking me through an inquiry. Okay. |
| [00:31:30]  Speaker 4: | Yeah. Alright. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:32:00]  [00:32:30] | So inquiry is it's questioning and it's questioning paired with sources and tasks, carrying out tasks to then get to answering one big umbrella question and being able to construct an argument in response to that question. Um, and so what that looks like in a classroom is, um, you know, with an inquiry, you start with staging the question, um, you pull background info that maybe your students already might have, and you stage the compelling question, which is the question that guides the entire inquiry, um, in a way that the students understand what they're actually being asked. And then from there you present smaller questions or supporting questions, um, and with each supporting question and, you know, the time that it takes to implement each supporting question differs depending on the inquiry, depending on your students. Um, but then you work through supporting questions that kind of all serve as legs or branches from the compelling question. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:33:00]  [00:33:30] | Um, and so maybe for each day you might work on a supporting question. Um, and those supporting questions are paired with sources so that, you know, I always tell my students, I'm sure you have an opinion, but I don't want to hear it unless you have evidence to back it up. And so those sources serve as that evidence. Um, the sources can be, um, readings, videos, audio sources, they can be really any sort of media. Um, then the students work through those supporting questions, using the sources and they complete tasks that essentially serve as a response to each supporting question. Um, they work through each supporting question and then once they're done with those supporting questions and looking at all these sources that relate to the big topic, they have all this evidence that's been sorted in certain ways to then fit under that umbrella of that compelling question. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:34:00]  [00:34:30] | Um, so then what you do at the end with an inquiry is you ask your students, I want you to answer this compelling question. I want you to argue your response to this compelling question. Um, and they ha there's no excuse for them to not have evidence. Um, so it's this really, I think of it as this way of scaffolding, um, students to construct an argument to a question, um, while putting the work on them and with presenting the evidence to them throughout the inquiry. Um, and the, my favorite thing about inquiry is that with that argument, um, at the end of an inquiry, you can ask students to convey their argument in many different ways. Um, you can have them write an essay outline. You could have them write an essay, you could have them create a podcast. Um, and then from there, once they've constructed their argument, a lot of times the students, even without me presenting it this way, they feel connected to the question and they found some that there's an issue at hand or something of the sort. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:35:00]  [00:35:30] | And so then they want to do something with it. And then you have the piece of inquiry called taking informed action, um, where students can take what they've learned and take their argument and do something with it, or do something about the issue they've seen or connected maybe, um, the inquiry was related to a topic in history, but maybe there's a similar issue today. And so you can give students an opportunity connect to, to connect to today and then do something, contact a representative, um, host a voting drive, um, do something and take action. So that's essentially what an inquiry looks like from beginning to end. Um, and yeah, I mean, it's really, when I think of inquiry, I think of questions and I think of, um, being curious and then doing something with it. So yeah, so my mom would say, so, yeah, what's so hard about that. Totally makes sense. Hmm. What's so hard about that. |
| Speaker 4: | [inaudible] |
| Speaker 3: | What makes an inquiry card |
| Speaker 4: | [inaudible] |
| Speaker 3: | Inquiry is |
| Speaker 4: | Start over. |
| [00:36:00]  Speaker 3: | Why, let me ask it this way. Why is inquiry, why is inquiry such a difficult shift for teachers? |
| Speaker 3:  [00:36:30] | Inquiry can be a very difficult shift for teachers. Um, and teachers are sometimes just afraid to try it, um, because there is a shift from teacher standing in front of the students and, you know, guiding them through a lesson or guiding them through a unit. But inquiry puts that, you know, you generally might stage the question as a class or might stage the question more directly, but then from there it's on the students and they know what they're supposed to be doing, and they guide themselves through it. Um, and some things that are hard about that is one as a teacher, you have to give up some control, um, and you kind of have to get out of the way. And that can be scary. Um, because, you know, I, there's a saying about, you know, idle hands, what does it say? I answered the devil. |
| [00:37:00]  Speaker 3:  [00:37:30]  [00:38:00] | Yeah. I don't answer the devil devil's workshop. And so students, um, you know, you worry that, Oh, well, if they're just guiding themselves something bad could happen. Um, but what I've found is with inquiry, they're so focused on the thinking, they're not idle, they're working and they know that they're supposed to be working, um, and it takes time to build that and get them to guide themselves and build that trust. But once you do, it's awesome. And, um, I think another thing that is a little bit, um, kind of difficult for teachers to want to implement inquiry is that fear of pacing and that fear of, you know, and that that's too, there's two parts to that pacing in terms of this student might be working at a slower pace than the student because they need more time working with these sources. Um, and what I would say to that is you just have to make the space, um, and you modify the sources and you modify the tasks for what your students need. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:38:30] | Um, and you just do your best. And, you know, you also have to understand, and this has always been the case with teaching. Sometimes a lesson might take a little bit longer than you planned, um, but it's so worth what the students are going to get out of it. Um, and then along with that is just the pacing, not necessarily students being at a different pace, but just, you know, maybe my classes are falling behind the pacing of my PLC, but that's where then those colleagues come into play is, Hey, I'm implementing this with my, and I have presented it this way so times, and it's never been an issue, um, with my PLC because I've been upfront with them is that, Hey, I'm implementing this inquiry. So I might be a couple days behind you all because I really want to take the time on it, just a heads up. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:39:00] | Um, and it's never been anything we can't get caught back up on or something that wasn't worth the work that was put in. Um, so yeah, I think the things are scariest is giving up the control and then pacing. Um, but what you don't realize is you get so much more out of it. And a lot of times I think that teachers are afraid of not having direct instruction because you don't have as much control over, well, I need my students to know this, but there are ways to thread those topics or those that vocab in an inquiry. Um, so yeah. |
| [00:39:30]  Speaker 2:  [00:40:00] | So is there ever a time, has there ever been a time I'm asking you a few more questions. I may give you a break. Okay. We'll set for documentary shoot back. Has there ever been a time in your department meeting? You know, when I've interviewed you guys, it's all, you know, sunshine and roses and we get along every day and it almost sounds a little unreal. You know, when we looked at the footage, we were like, we can't put this in there. It'd be like bull shit. And so I guess what I would ask is it, has there ever been a time where you all have had a disagreement, particularly around inquiry where there's been some resistance and how have you worked through that, |
| Speaker 3:  [00:40:30]  [00:41:00] | But it's okay if it's not all great. So at the beginning of this school year or this past school year, we had new standards. And so we as a department came to the agreement that we want every PLC. So, you know, world history, us history, civics to implement at least one inquiry per semester. Okay. Because we want to be trying it and we want to work on it. Um, and I think initially there definitely were teachers in our department who were resistant because of the thought that, you know, this inquiry it's going to take long and how to now we have to restructure our units and we have to change the way our assessment looks. Um, and so that that's always going to be a fear and it's a transition. It's a change from something that, you know, some teachers have been teaching the same content for years. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:41:30]  [00:42:00] | And so now shifting the way that they're teaching it, um, it can be difficult. Um, and so we've had to have conversations about and conversations, not only in our department, but with our administration about, Hey, we're struggling with this. Can we change this common assessment to maybe not be a multiple choice exam, but can we change it and have it be a common assessment? That's a writing assessment. Um, and so having that almost resistance and opposition to inquiry led us to then having conversations that helped us to grow as a department. Um, and we're still having those conversations and we still, you know, sometimes I'm resistant or hesitant to implement an inquiry in a certain part of a unit, because I don't think I'll have the time or something of the soar. Um, but what that, then the way of solving that is then having conversations with your PLC with your department. Um, because if you're all on the same page, then, like I said, you know, we can make mistakes and we can fall behind and, um, we're going to be forgiving and it's not the end of the world and we're going to grow from it. Um, |
| Speaker 2:  [00:42:30]  [00:43:00] | Yeah. Good. That was cool. Perfect. Um, will you talk about one other question related to that? How important was it to start? Lot of times I've worked. I was talking to this group yesterday, they before, um, and they want to develop 12 inquiries to teach about peace for a us history course next year. And I just had to go through like, what how's that sound? And I was like, sounds amazing. I just don't think you're going to be successful. And so, you know, I said, you, you know, I often tell folks that they need to build an on ramp for inquiry. And it sounds like that's something that y'all did here is that you built this on ramp of who can argue with one inquiry a semester. I mean, that's really hard to argue. Yeah. So maybe you could talk a little bit about building capacity for inquiry to happen more regularly and that it was important for you all to sort of start out with something doable. And then, you know, you know, one in grade |
| Speaker 3:  [00:43:30]  [00:44:00]  [00:44:30] | Inquiry, it does require you to change, um, you know, things about your classroom and things brought your instruction. And so change doesn't happen in a day. Um, so our department, you know, we set the goal of kind of easing into implementing inquiry with just one a semester. Um, and what that required is, you know, our administrators knew even our district administrators, um, they were on board with it and they knew, Hey, we're trying this because we know we have new standards. Um, and so there was that communication piece, um, and having just that one inquiry a semester that was required, um, allowed us to then teachers in our department who have more experience with it with inquiry, we had more time to then have conversations about how to make it better. Um, so that maybe next year we can implement two a semester and we can build, um, and there's no rush to turn your entire curriculum into inquiry. I know teachers who have done it and it's amazing, but it takes time. Um, and so I think easing in helps you to then find those kinks and those things that you need to work on in your classroom to make inquiry work better. And then from there, you can start, it'll get, and it'll be more seamless to kind of adjust your already the materials you already have into inquiry. Um, so that's been very important is kind of easing into it and being open and communicating with administrators about what we're doing. Um, |
| Speaker 2:  [00:45:00] | Yeah. Good. Good. Do you have coffee is over there? Why don't you go take like a billion sips and then we're going to do big finish. Okay, good Jack, thank you. Sometimes important stand up. So you get to, you know, yeah, yeah. Just a minute. They turned off the air because of the sound. Yeah. |
| [00:45:30]  Speaker 1: | We got like a cleaner inquiry explaining to the mom cause she kind of got to everything, but your role, |
| Speaker 2: | The reason I had her do that is not a, we might use it. But what I was really trying to do is circle back to inquiry culture, to get a more precise answer when I started asking, because if she's thinking about this is what an inquiry is, this is what it's like, see what I'm saying, but I could |
| [00:46:00]  Speaker 1: | [inaudible] |
| [00:46:30]  Speaker 2:  [00:47:00] | Okay. I think we're okay on. I want you, I want to do a couple of quick clips and then I'm going to ask you the big finish stuff. But one of the things I want you to do is define inquiry, um, in, uh, you did a great job. It just took you a while, which it does. So what I'd like you to do is define inquiry. Like inquiry is really about three things, questions, tasks, sources, it's the questions, the compelling, and the supporting questions that we put in front of students that make them curious. It's the sources that we put in front of them that allow them to investigate those questions. And then it's the tasks that will allow them to communicate their ideas in really meaningful ways. Okay. Something like that. Yeah. Okay. So can you describe inquiry for me summer? So |
| Speaker 3:  [00:47:30]  [00:48:00] | Inquiry is really about questions, sources, and tasks, um, questions being compelling and supporting questions that we present to students. And that really gets them engaged in the inquiry and sparks curiosity. And then the sources gives them somewhere to start on those questions, um, gives them the evidence to build from, to then answer those questions. Um, and it allows them to work with content where the teachers not just give, feeding them the information. Um, and then the tasks are the things that we ask students to do or create. Um, and so that gives them a voice to then answer those questions in their own creative ways. Um, and they are, the tasks can always be very diverse. They can be written, they can be verbal. Um, so yeah, that's inquiry is really about those three main things. |
| Speaker 5: | Great. Yeah. Clean, fake. Wonderful. Um, uh, |
| Speaker 1: | Okay, |
| Speaker 5:  [00:48:30]  [00:49:00] | So I'm going to ask you about a thing we're calling an inquiry culture, you know, so each school is, it's a little eco system, that's mixing metaphors, but it's its own little culture, right? So if you go to Scott County, if you go to Jefferson County, if you go, you know, to Fayette County, everybody's got their own culture. Um, and yet I think an inquiry culture requires some similar things, you know? Um, so we're trying to show both the uniqueness of Woodford County, but also sort of the lessons of Woodford County, you know, about what makes inquiry possible. So, you know, we asked, we asked Brian Lewis, you know what, when I say inquiry culture, you know, what do you think that means? What does it mean to have an inquiry culture here in your social studies department at Woodford |
| Speaker 3:  [00:49:30]  [00:50:00] | Having an inquiry culture here at Woodford to me really means being vulnerable. Um, and being honest, um, with both your colleagues and with students, um, because inquiry, it can get, it is really honest. Um, and you know, you're presenting sources and questions and you're letting students kind of guide themselves into learning that you don't have a lot of control over. Um, and so it, it gets really real. And so you have to, um, you have to be honest yourself and you have to be honest with your colleagues. So I think the biggest thing for me about inquiry culture is just being vulnerable, um, and being open to new ideas. Um, and once you do that, I mean, really the, the other pieces of that inquiry culture are the same culture that we've had as a school. So just implementing that vulnerability and being able to mess up and try new things, um, on top of the culture of the school that we already had, um, really just works together and builds. |
| [00:50:30]  Speaker 5:  [00:51:00] | So great. Okay. So would you say, um, you know, to build an inquiry culture, you really need collaboration, that's sort of the central key idea. It seems to be, that's something that just comes up over and over and over again with you, Would you say that's true. Yeah. You need a collaborative environment. So an inquiry culture means that it's a collaborative environment, collaboration with your administration, collaboration with your colleagues, collaboration with your students, ultimately. Right. So, um, so tell me a little bit about inquiry culture and the role of collaboration in that. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:51:30]  [00:52:00] | Having an inquiry culture really requires an is collaboration. Um, and that collaboration looks very different with, you know, you have to pull in collaboration with your administrators to build an inquiry culture. You have to build collaboration with your PLC with your department. Um, even we've started to build that collaboration with other departments. Um, we've had science teachers who have sparked interest in implementing inquiry in their classrooms. Um, and then also that collaboration with your students and that looks like, you know, building trust with them from the beginning. And you really have to do that with, um, everyone you're collaborating with because you need to be comfortable giving and receiving feedback. Um, so I think inquiry culture is based around collaboration and collaboration is based around, you know, being vulnerable, um, and working together |
| Speaker 5:  [00:52:30] | So great. So collaboration is one of those words. You did great job. Um, collaboration is one of those words that can come off as a little jargony. So I want you to be specific about what you mean, and we can just start with administration when, when you're collaborating with your administrators, what does that look like specifically? And you can give a for instance, for instance, you know, my principal this past year, when he came into sort of look at me, you're doing an evaluation, we had a conversation ahead of time that he would get specific there. So what does collaboration look like with an administrator? |
| Speaker 3:  [00:53:00]  [00:53:30] | Collaboration with administration looks like communicating what you're doing in your classroom. Um, and then being open to receiving feedback. So at Woodford, and I think most schools and most school districts have some form of an evaluation process. And so collaboration in that evaluation process looks like communicating on the front end, you know, before my administrator comes in to observe me, I'm sending them my lesson plan or sending them the materials I'm using and just telling them, this is what my students are doing. This is what we've been working on. Um, so that when they come in and observe me and they maybe see that, you know, I'm not even saying anything and my students are just doing the work that they understand that that's not me just, you know, checking out and just giving up it's my students are working on this and we've set this up and I'm putting the work on them. |
| Speaker 3:  [00:54:00] | Um, and then having conversations, collaboration with, um, administrators looks like having conversations then after the fact, um, and as a teacher being comfortable enough to say, yeah, I don't think this part went very well. Um, do you have any advice on how I could make it better? Um, or I don't think this part went very well and next time I want to try this. Um, so really it's that communication that makes good collaboration with administrators about just what's going on in your classroom, um, so that they can walk in at any point, um, and kind of have an understanding as to who you are as a teacher and what you're doing and what you're working toward. Um, |
| Speaker 2:  [00:54:30]  [00:55:00] | It feels like something that you're saying is, you know, just as we serve, sort of go harder, darken a soft collaboration, it sounds like, you know, one of the key sort of actions is, is, is, is communication as part of that collaboration, which seems sort of obvious, but it's not, you know, being able to communicate, but at the heart of it, you have to, I mean, I communicate with a lot of people, but I wouldn't necessarily call that a collaboration. It's just communicating, using words. Um, it feels like in order to have a collaborative environment, you need, you need to be able to trust, right. The person that you're talking to. Um, so maybe talk a little bit about that. What does it mean to have, you know, people that you, how do you build trust with an administrator? |
| Speaker 3:  [00:55:30]  [00:56:00]  [00:56:30] | Yeah, so I would say that communication is vital to collaboration, but that communication is not entirely collaboration. When you collaborate, you are opening yourself up to taking suggestions or having someone else, you know, create the structure of a lesson and then implementing it in your classroom and then coming back and talking about how it went. Um, so collaboration requires trust. Um, and I think that the way that you build that trust with, for example, administrators is through being honest. Um, and then I think through just being, you know, having showing a little bit of grace on both ends, um, and I think I'm really lucky here to have administrators who are understanding and forgiving, um, and so that they gained my trust that way. Um, but I think that being honest with them has helped them to even be more, um, trusting of what I'm doing in my classroom. So I think that, um, just being open, um, and just building relationships outside of those evaluations or those, um, conversations about PLC that are, you know, building relationships with people in your building, um, so that you just want the best them Period, you know, outside of, even outside of the classroom. Um, so that's really helped is just having those strong relationships has helped me as a teacher to trust that my administrators want what's best for me. Um, and I think it works both ways. So how do you, |
| Speaker 5: | How do you great, um, how do you build that same culture with your colleagues? How do you build an inquiry culture with your colleagues? |
| Speaker 4: | [inaudible] |
| [00:57:00]  Speaker 3:  [00:57:30]  [00:58:00] | Building an inquiry culture with your colleagues, I think is for me, um, it's looked a lot like, you know, sometimes I'll ask my colleagues, Hey, can I come observe you today? I want to see what you're doing in your classroom. Um, and you know, that opens that door up for, I w I want to learn from you. Um, and naturally I think that's going to turn around and have other people want to learn from you as well. So I think that, um, the key is getting interested in what other teachers are doing, um, because then you spark those conversations and you have that open relationship of being able to talk about, um, what you're doing in your classroom and not feeling embarrassed, or, um, feeling like, Oh, you're better than I am, or I'm better than you. And so I think that the key to that is just, um, you know, seeing what your colleagues are doing. So, and I'm lucky all of my colleagues have been willing to let me come and sit in and observe them. Um, and then they'll, you know, even though I'm only about to be in my third year of teaching, um, I have colleagues who have been teaching for much longer and they'll come and ask me, Hey, I'm struggling on this. How do you think I should implement it? Um, and that's just really awesome, but it didn't happen right away, you know, it takes time. Um, yeah. |
| Speaker 5:  [00:58:30] | Good. Sounds like, you know, another element of that culture is being, um, receptive, you know, like walking in as a teacher and, and not just feeling like you have all the answers, but that you are receptive to getting it wrong. Um, and receptive to getting feedback. That may seem a little bit at the moment. Um, but you know, that you're a work in progress. Um, you know, as a teacher that you're not born a great teacher, that you become over time with a lot of hard work and even that's tentative. So maybe talk about that a little bit during your receptivity, you know, building an inquiry culture requires, you know, being receptive to feedback, |
| [00:59:00]  Speaker 3:  [00:59:30]  [01:00:00] | Building an inquiry culture requires teachers being receptive to receiving feedback from other teachers. Um, I think that it's, you know, as humans, it's easy to get criticism of some store and, you know, take it personally and get down on yourself. Um, and there, there are times when that happens, but you really have to just understand that, you know, as we all want what's best for our students. So when we're giving feedback to one another, that's where that's coming from is I want to help you be better so that we can be better together for our students. Um, and so being vulnerable and open to that feedback, um, has helped me grow so much quicker than I thought was possible. Um, and I think that, you know, that really takes building that trust and those relationships with your colleagues to make sure that they know, and that, you know, that you do have their best interest in mind, and they're not just trying to, you know, show off or be the best teacher. Um, and that's just, you know, I don't think any educators are in it for that reason. Um, so I think that just understanding that and building that relationship from the beginning allow has allowed me to be receptive to the feedback from my colleagues and not take it personally and just understand that we all want what's best for our students. |
| Speaker 2:  [01:00:30]  [01:01:00] | That's great. Yeah. Um, I always think teaching is, has these inherent tensions of the, you ha you need to be humble, but you also need to be strong, you know, you know, receptive, but you also need to be confident, you know, you need to be forgiving. Um, but you also need to trust yourself, you know, there's these tensions that exist. And I think often when we have a collaborative collegial environment, it helps mediate those tensions and help you sort of get between those two poles because, you know, sometimes receptives can get us off the, you know, being receptive can get us off the rails and the next day we have to get up and be confident. |
| Speaker 3:  [01:01:30] | Yeah. Yeah. Well, and even, even like students will give feedback. And I ask for feedback from my students, especially when I implement inquiry, you know, I'll send out when we're done, I'll send out like a Google survey and just ask, what did you like about this unit? What did you dislike? What would you like to do different next time? Um, and that has my students have thanked me for asking them for their feedback, um, because they feel then like their voice matters in my classroom and that I actually will listen to what they're asking of me, um, within reason. Um, so I think that being receptive, you know, you can be confident in your teaching while still being receptive, um, and being open to being better and that's in any profession. Um, and you know, it's, it's just all based around that trust and knowing that everyone has your best interest in mind. I think, yeah. I think |
| [01:02:00]  Speaker 2:  [01:02:30]  [01:03:00] | That connects back up with inquiry, this notion of, you know, getting feedback. I mean, I love that story of getting feedback from your students. And that seems to me, it seems to be a critical part of building an inquiry culture, that the idea of, of inquiry from a content lens you've done a great job is, is talk about mere asking questions about what it means to be human and what it means to be humane. Um, but pedagogically instructionally, that means to be, make students vulnerable. You know, it means exposing what Ryan new talks about is gaps, you know, gaps in their understanding gaps in knowing and for them not to shut down over those gaps. And you model that, you know, you've talked a little, you modeled that by showing that you also have gaps in your instruction and then sort of by mirroring that, you know, reflective process in your own instruction, your giving students permission to be reflective as well about their learning. And so I wonder if you could talk a little bit about that, you know, that, you know, that the way in which you build trust with students when you're doing inquiry yeah. |
| [01:03:30]  Speaker 3:  [01:04:00] | When I'm implementing inquiry in my classroom, um, and just in my classroom in general, I make sure that I am very open with my students about the process that I go through. And sometimes I'll pull them into the process, you know, and I'll say, Hey, I'm planning ahead for this unit on topic X. And I'm wondering like, what do you all, how do you enjoy learning, um, best or I'll ask, you know, after implementing an inquiry, I'll ask students, um, you know, what works well. And sometimes students they'll be open and honest and, you know, if I give a survey or something, I give the opportunity for students to be anonymous, but students might say something like the sources were really hard to read. Um, and it was hard for me to understand them. And so I prefer maybe an audio source. Um, and you know, that allows me to then say, Oh, well, then I can find a recording of this, or I can do a voiceover of this and provide that option for students. Um, and admitting myself that I can be better to my students, allows them to then be open to feedback and to improving what they're doing in my classroom. |
| [01:04:30]  Speaker 2: | That's great. Awesome. So I want you to say that again, sort of a truncated soundbite form. So building an inquiry culture means building a relationship, an academic, or an intellectual relationship with my students that has trust at its foundation or something like that. And then talk about it briefly. Yeah. |
| [01:05:00]  Speaker 3: | Building an inquiry culture within my classroom, um, looks like showing my students that I can be vulnerable and that I'm working through the process of improving my instruction, which then allows them to be vulnerable as well, and be open to feedback just like I am, um, with them. And so I think that that's crucial to building inquiry culture in my classroom is that vulnerability. Um, and once you do that, you know, you're going to have students participating more. Um, and so I think that that's just, that's the key, um, to building that inquiry culture. |
| [01:05:30]  Speaker 2:  [01:06:00] | Good. Good. Um, alright. Um, I want you to say the lines I'm mean I'm going to say a line and then I want you to repeat it back to me and it doesn't have to be perfectly repeated back. You can add live a little bit, but in case we don't have a quick sound bite. I want to make sure that I have something close to this. So, um, I want you to say, in order to build an inquiry culture, you need to be willing to take risks as a teacher and give up a little control. Okay. |
| Speaker 3: | In order to build an inquiry culture, uh, you need to be willing to take risks as a teacher and to give up some control in your classroom. |
| Speaker 2:  [01:06:30] | Good. Um, in order to build an inquiry culture, you need colleagues that let you tinker with inquiry, kicking the tires, something like that. Yeah. In order to build an inquiry culture, you need unique colleagues that, that support you, um, you know, trying to stop you, you need colleagues to collaborate with. Okay. Something like that. Yeah. To let you play around a bit. Yeah. |
| Speaker 3:  [01:07:00] | Yeah. Uh, in order to build an inquiry culture, you need colleagues who are willing to allow you to take risks in your classroom and then be there for you to then give you feedback to help you improve. |
| Speaker 2: | Great, good. Uh, in order to build, uh, uh, a inquiry culture needs supportive and trusting colleagues, um, including, you know, mentors, you know, PLC |
| Speaker 3:  [01:07:30] | Administrators, okay. In order to build inquiry culture, you need supportive and trusting colleagues. And that includes PLC members. That includes department members that includes teachers in the building and other departments. And it includes, um, administrators. |
| Speaker 2: | Great, good. But most of all, most of all, when you're building an inquiry culture, you need students, you need students to trust you. Um, and, um, |
| Speaker 3:  [01:08:00] | They need to trust that, you know, sort of what you're doing. Yeah. But most of all, in order to build a great culture, but most of all, in order to build an inquiry culture, you need students who are trusting of you, um, and who are understanding that mistakes are going to happen, um, on my part and the student's part, but just willing to students who are willing to trust you and just go for it. |
| Speaker 2:  [01:08:30] | Great. Cool. Alright, Ryan, am I anything? Nope, we're good. Okay. Alright. It's hard. Isn't it? I think it's hard to it's summer. Yeah, I was, I was, I've been trying the last couple. |