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Sample Professional Development Activity: Effective Teaching Practices

Professional development focus or topic: Deepening understanding of the NCTM's Effective Teaching Practices

Intended audience: Small group or large group of teachers (any grade)

Outcomes: Teachers will be able to ...

- Connect teacher actions with the Teaching Practices
- Describe the essence of each of the Teaching Practices
- Describe distinctions and connections among the Teaching Practices

Preparation:

- Download the Teaching Practices & Shifts in Classroom Practice Look Fors Bookmark for each teacher.
- Prepare *Shifts* Placemats by using Tools 2.1 and 2.10. Enlarge each *Shift* so there is one at the top of each page (horizontal format). This can also be done on 11x14 paper so there is more space or even as large as chart paper. You should have one placemat for each *Shift*.

Description of activity:

- Distribute a bookmark to each teacher. If needed, provide time for teachers to read the look fors for each of the Teaching Practices on the bookmark.
- Give a *Shifts* Placemat to each small group of teachers.
- Instruct teachers to generate examples of teacher actions (what a teacher might say or do during a lesson) for their *Shift* and write each on a sticky note and place it where it might fall on the continuum.
- Encourage teachers to generate teacher moves for the entire continuum, not just the right end.
- After each group has completed its list of teacher actions, engage teachers in a gallery walk to view the other *Shifts* continua. You can require each table group to add one more example for each *Shift*, if time allows. Alternatively, you could ask each group to share their teacher actions with the whole group instead of the gallery walk.
- When the gallery walk is concluded, debrief about what teachers noticed. You could ask them to do a self-assessment of where they see their teaching on specific or all *Shifts* (see Tool 2.1).
- Next, engage teachers in a dialogue about what Mathematical Practices could be supported by the teacher actions. Share a teacher action to illustrate for the group. For example, a teacher might say, "You switched strategies—what made you decide to try something different?" This would be located toward the right end of the continuum for *Shift 7*. Now the question becomes this: If a teacher asked this question, which Mathematical Practice might students have an opportunity to demonstrate? This teacher action seems to align with Mathematical Practice 1 (Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them). Have table groups return to the teacher actions they created for their *Shift*. On each sticky note, indicate which Mathematical Practice could be demonstrated by students.
- Summarize by highlighting what has emerged from the conversation. This activity is powerful because teachers begin to see that there are very few teacher actions on the left end of the continua that connect to Mathematical Practices! It is an important reminder of why teaching needs to move toward the right end of the continua.