

# School Team Focus Audit: Make Coaching Count



**Purpose:** This audit helps your PLC examine whether your current instructional efforts are anchored in a *clear, student-centered focus*—the kind that drives meaningful coaching, deepens trust, and accelerates learning.

## Instructions for the School Leader or Coach:

**Timing:** Use during a PLC meeting, coaching cycle kickoff, or department work session.

**Facilitation Time:** 30–45 minutes

**Materials Needed:** Printed copies or digital access to the audit, whiteboard/chart paper, and sticky notes or collaborative doc.

## Step 1: Reflection – “What Are We Getting Good At?” (10 minutes)

Ask the team: “If we walked into five different classrooms on our team this week and asked students, ‘What are you getting good at today?’—what would we hear?”

On a shared document or chart paper, have team members:

- Write down actual or likely student responses.
- Label them either:
  - ☐ General (“Math,” “Working hard,” “Notes”)
  - ☒ Focused (“I’m getting good at analyzing character motivations,” “I’m learning to compare primary sources using evidence.”)

Discuss:

- What do our responses tell us about our current level of shared instructional focus?
- Are students clear on what they’re learning and why?

## Step 2: Focus Audit Questions (15–20 minutes)

Read and rate each item as a team (1 = not yet, 3 = somewhat, 5 = definitely):

Question	Score (1–5)
1. Do we have a clearly articulated academic focus for our grade/subject this quarter/semester?	
2. Can all teachers on the team describe it in the same way?	
3. Do our coaching conversations consistently align with this focus?	
4. Do lesson objectives, success criteria, and formative assessments reflect this focus?	
5. Can students describe what they’re learning and how they’re improving in that area?	
6. Do we analyze student work and data in relation to this focus during PLC time?	
7. Do we adjust instruction based on what we learn together?	
8. Is the focus actionable for all teachers—not just a slogan or goal?	

Discussion Prompts:

- Which items scored lowest?
- Which ones are strengths we can build on?
- Where are there gaps between our intentions and daily classroom practice?

**Step 3: Decide Together (10–15 minutes)**

Ask: “If we had to define one shared instructional focus that would improve learning for all students right now, what would it be?”

Use this sentence stem to guide clarity: “We are working to improve student ability to \_\_\_\_\_, so they can \_\_\_\_\_.”

Examples:

- “We are working to improve student ability to cite textual evidence effectively, so they can defend claims with clarity and precision.”
- “We are working to improve student ability to construct and solve equations, so they can analyze and represent real-world situations.”

Then:

- Identify 2–3 next steps to align instruction and coaching with that focus.
- Name how progress will be monitored (e.g., student work, walk-through look-fors, student interviews).

**Bonus Tip for Coaches & Leaders**

Use student interviews at regular intervals across the school year.

Ask students: “What are you getting good at in this class?”

Track trends. Bring quotes to the team. Let student clarity shape your next coaching moves.

For support with this tool, please contact Chris at Waterfall Learning: [briggshale@waterfalllearning.com](mailto:briggshale@waterfalllearning.com) or text 719-510-4543.

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