# Solution Tree | Press

**You Can Learn! Building Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy With the PLC at Work® Process**

*By Tim Brown and William M. Ferriter*

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## Study Guide

This study guide is a companion to the book *You Can Learn! Building Student Ownership, Motivation, and Efficacy With the PLC at Work® Process* by Tim Brown and William M. Ferriter. *You Can Learn!* offers K–12 educators purposeful, efficacy-building strategies and protocols to help students take ownership of their learning and increase engagement.

This guide is arranged by chapter, enabling readers to either work their way through the entire book or focus on the specific topics addressed in a particular chapter. It can be used by individuals, small groups, or an entire team to identify key points, raise questions for consideration, assess conditions in a particular school or district, and suggest steps that might be taken to promote a healthy school culture.

We thank you for your interest in this book, and we hope this guide is a useful tool in your efforts to create a healthy culture in your school or district.

# Chapter 1

# Building a Commitment to Learning in Students

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1. Consider the anecdote shared at the beginning of the chapter. How did Tim Brown's challenge assembly reinforce the school's mission, vision, values, and goals? How did students engage with these four pillars during the assembly and throughout the school year? Why is this important?

2. What is a BHAG? Why are BHAGs important for school success? What was Tim's BHAG for Campbell Elementary?

3. What are four ways to rally students to become partners in accomplishing BHAGs? Does your school currently employ any of these strategies? If so, which ones, and how might you strengthen your current strategies to encourage more student engagement?

4. What do the authors mean when they say, "We argue that 'going visual' with data is also a great strategy for reinforcing a culture of learning for students" (page 16)? What are some ways you can go visual with your classroom's data?

5. List the four recommendations for consistently communicating the four pillars to students. What might be your first step in connecting students to your school's mission, vision, values, and goals?

6. How might you respond to someone who says, "Primary students cannot handle conversations related to the school's mission, vision, values, and goals, so we do not introduce those concepts to our young students"?

# Chapter 2

## Helping Students Understand the Expectations for a Unit of Study

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1. Why is it important that collaborative teams not only identify what students need to learn but also provide clarity and guidance on learning expectations to students? In what ways could the third-grade team that was featured at the beginning of the chapter have communicated learning expectations to its students?

2. Consider figure 2.1 (page 33) and figure 2.2 (page 34). How do these examples effectively communicate learning outcomes to students?

3. What is the purpose of a success checklist? Consider an upcoming assignment. How might students benefit from having a success checklist for the assignment?

4. List the steps Paul Cancellieri takes when using exemplars to make learning intentions explicit for students. Why is it important that collaborative teams build collective clarity around success criteria?

5. John Hattie (2009) states, "I discovered that feedback is most powerful when it is from the student to the teacher" (p. 173). Do you agree? Why or why not?

6.  How might school leaders encourage teams to develop their own best practices?

## Chapter 3

## Helping Students Assess Their Progress Toward Mastery

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1. Review the research shared in this chapter about students being active participants in the assessment process, and then list some reasons for why it is important to give students opportunities to assess their progress. When reviewing an assignment, how would the mindset of a student who learned how to self-assess early on compare to the mindset of a student who has never self-assessed?

2. What does *turning feedback into detective work* mean? How might this look and sound like in your classroom?

3. Why do the authors recommend that teams ask students to set and work toward achieving short-term goals when beginning to make goal setting part of their routine? What are the elements of effective student goals?

4. Do you provide students with regular opportunities to keep records of their progress? If not, how might you integrate progress tracking or record keeping into your work with students? Is it possible to adapt one of the various methods students use in figures 3.3–3.7 (pages 63–66)?

5.  Reflect on Leah Alcala's strategy for avoiding giving grades immediately. If you were to avoid giving grades for as long as possible, how might students react? How would it affect student learning?

6.  Consider your classroom experiences. What were some reasons for why students were not truthful about their performance? What can you say to reassure students that it is in their best interests to be honest?

**Chapter 4**

**Helping Students Take Action**

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1. Define *self-efficacy*, and provide examples of how someone with high self-efficacy handles challenges versus someone with low self-efficacy. What are four primary influences that develop one's self-efficacy?

2. Recall James' story from the beginning of the chapter. If James had administered a practice test a week before the final test, what steps would he have needed to take? How would each step advance student learning and prepare students for the final exam?

3. What are extension menus, and why are they important for student learning? What four strategies can teachers use to extend learning?

4. Describe how Fern Creek High School has revamped the role grades play in student learning. How do the self-reporting tools as shown in figure 4.8 (page 96) and figure 4.9 (page 97) maximize student learning?

5. Why is it important to limit corrective feedback to students? Will it be easy or challenging to limit your feedback? If easy, what steps need to be taken? If challenging, what is your first step to begin this transition?

6.  What is your technology policy in your classroom? How might you update your policy so that students have frequent access to digital tools? How might you ensure technology use is meaningful to student learning?