OPTIONAL SESSION · 90 MINUTES

Shared proficiency

What grades, student work and students' own words each say about proficiency

USE IT WHEN

Your results, or a gap between course grades and test results, make the team wonder whether teachers and students mean the same thing by proficient. Shared understanding of proficiency is one of the five root causes in the playbook. This session helps a team check whether it is theirs.

WHERE IT FITS

The AchieveMetrics Improvement Process

STAGE	WHAT HAPPENS	HOW THIS SESSION CONNECTS
Stage 1	Understand the root causes	The team already knows the five root causes. This session goes deep on one: shared understanding of proficiency.
Stage 2	Read results through the root causes	Use this session here, when results or grades make the team wonder whether everyone, students included, means the same thing by proficient.
Stage 3	PDSA with high-impact practices	The question the team leaves with becomes its first PDSA question. The team picks a practice from the high-impact practices handout (effect sizes above the 0.40 hinge point) that fits what it found.
Stages 4 and 5	Map the unit, run the cycle	The criteria the team writes here go straight onto the Teacher Planning Sheet and the Backward Unit Map.

BEFORE THE SESSION

A team might bring

1. **One standard** the team is teaching now.
2. **One recent task or item** on that standard, with its directions and scoring criteria. A released SBAC or CAST practice item or a Test Bank question works well.
3. **A few de-identified responses** showing different levels of evidence. Follow local privacy rules; no names.
4. **The Achievement Level Descriptor** for the claim or domain, if the team uses state results.
5. **One sentence** on what the team means today when it reports a student as proficient.

No student work yet? Use the invented Grade 8 case on page 3. Don't mix it with real student evidence.

THE SESSION

90 minutes, one question at a time

MINUTES	MOVE	PROMPTS A FACILITATOR MIGHT USE	TEAM PRODUCT
0 to 8	Purpose and norms	What would make this time useful? What should we avoid assuming?	Focus and norms
8 to 18	Surface current meanings	When we say a student is proficient, what evidence do we point to? What does a course grade tell us?	Our current meaning
18 to 33	Read the expectation	What is the student asked to understand or do? Where do we see that in the task, the criteria or the ALD?	Reference point
33 to 48	Describe student work	What can we describe in this response? What does it show? What is still uncertain?	Observations
48 to 60	Compare the sources	Where do the grade, the task evidence and the student's own words agree? Where do they differ?	Matches and gaps
60 to 70	Hear the student view	How would a student know what proficient looks like here? What would they say they need to show?	Student view
70 to 82	Name the question	Does this point to shared proficiency as a root cause, or to another one? What do we most want to find out?	Root cause and question
82 to 90	Hand off to Stage 3	Which high-impact practice fits? What evidence will we look at, and when?	First PDSA question

Facilitation notes

1. **One question at a time.** Give quiet time to look at the evidence before anyone talks.
2. **Observations before interpretations.** When a claim comes up, ask: “What in the evidence makes us think that?”
3. **Keep more than one reading open.** Leave uncertainty visible rather than settling it for the team.
4. **If grades and task evidence differ,** ask what each source includes and how it was produced. Don't assume one is right or suggest a grading change.
5. **If the team jumps to a fix,** ask: “What would we want to understand first?”
6. **The team names the root cause.** It may be shared proficiency or another of the five. Don't define proficiency, pick the strategy or decide which students are ready. Teachers choose.

CLOSE BY HANDING OFF TO STAGE 3

Write the team's own words onto the Teacher Planning Sheet: the criteria in student language, the question, the practice the team chose and a prediction as a number. Then follow the same students in the Same-Students Tracker.

At the next PLC, look at the agreed evidence first. Ask what we notice, what surprised us and what is still unclear. The team decides whether to continue, adapt or change.

One cycle in one class is evidence for the team's next decision. It does not prove that a practice caused growth.

INVENTED CASE · ALL DATA BELOW ARE MADE UP

Grade 8, linear relationships

Across three sections, 54 of 75 students have a B or higher. A short check-in asked: “How do you know you showed proficiency?” The team hasn't yet looked at its grading policies or how the check-in lines up with the standard.

Reference: 8.EE.B.5 asks students to graph proportional relationships, interpreting the unit rate as the slope of the graph. A starting point for the team, not a scoring key.

ON THE PRIOR CHECK, STUDENTS WERE ASKED TO	SHOWED IT
Find a unit rate in a table and label the units.	49 of 75
Interpret the rate in context: say what it describes.	34 of 75
Connect the table and the graph: explain the same relationship.	20 of 75

CHECK-IN ANSWER (STUDENTS PICKED ONE)	COUNT
“I got the answer right.”	31 of 75
“I showed my steps.”	18 of 75
“I explained what the rate means.”	14 of 75
“I used the table and graph to show the same relationship.”	7 of 75
Blank or another answer	5 of 75

Four responses to one task

A cyclist travels 18 miles in 2 hours at a steady pace. A table and a graph show distance over time. Explain what the rate means and how it shows up in both.

RESPONSE	WHAT THE STUDENT WROTE
A	“9 miles each hour.”
B	“The line goes up 9.”
C	“At 1 hour it is 9 miles and at 2 hours it is 18 miles, so the distance goes up 9 miles for each hour.”
D	“I plotted the two points from the table, and they are on the line.”

QUESTIONS FOR THE TEAM

What does each source show? What do students say they need to show? What does the standard or ALD make clearer? Does this point to shared proficiency, or to another root cause? What would we want to see next?

These are team totals from one short check, not matched to individual grades. No response is labeled proficient; the team uses its reference and its judgment.

Course _____ Standard or focus _____ Date _____

TASK OR ITEM, AND THE CRITERIA OR ALD WE ARE USING

Describe before interpreting. Ask what the course grade includes before comparing it.

SOURCE	WHAT IT SHOWS (WHAT WE CAN POINT TO)	WHAT IT DOESN'T TELL US YET
Course grade		
Student response to the task		
Student's own words about proficiency		
Criteria or ALD		

WHERE DO THE SOURCES TELL THE SAME STORY?

WHERE DO THEY DIFFER, OR LEAVE A QUESTION?

WHICH ROOT CAUSE MIGHT THIS POINT TO? WHAT EVIDENCE WOULD TELL US?

Ask students in your own words, and listen before explaining. A team might use these questions in class or in a few short conversations.

1. What are you learning to understand or do?
2. What would show you that you can do it?
3. Which part feels clear? Which part is still unclear?
4. Where could you look to check what the task expects?

WHAT DID STUDENTS SAY OR SHOW?

WHAT HAD WE ASSUMED THEY UNDERSTOOD?

CRITERION 1 IN STUDENT WORDS	CRITERION 2	CRITERION 3	CRITERION 4

OUR QUESTION FOR STAGE 3, AND THE HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICE WE MIGHT TRY

NEXT

Carry the criteria and the question onto the Teacher Planning Sheet. Keep student information private and follow district rules for storing and sharing it.