10 Potential Data Discussion Pitfalls*
and How to React to Them

*aka *Opportunities*

If Your Teacher Team Does This	You Ask/Say This
Focus of data conversation shifts to issues over which the team has no control.	We have no real control over [XYZ]. But given those challenges, what can we do about [XYZ]?
Focus of data conversation is on trivial, relatively unimportant observations.	So what does this imply for [XYZ]? How does this affect the big picture? What generalizations can you draw from these observations? If you were to rank these items by priority, what would your list look like?
Teacher team is quick to blame students and reluctant to accept responsibility for learning gaps.	What could we be doing that we're not already doing? What part of this are we responsible for? What action should we take to improve this?
Data conversation becomes micro-focused on one particular student or test item.	So what does this imply for all of our students? What general observations do you have that affect most of our students? Do you think this is representative of all students [or all test items]?
Focus of data conversation shifts to skills students "should have acquired before this year."	So what can we do? How can we provide support for students who lack prerequisite skills? What about students who do have these skills?
Teacher team jumps prematurely to proposing solutions.	Part of this process is refraining from deciding on solutions until all relevant information has been presented and analyzed. Let's continue to get information that is relevant and hold back from proposing solutions until we have a clearer picture of what is going on.
Focus of data conversation shifts to items unrelated to the data at hand.	Let's make sure that we base our comments on the evidence before us. What evidence do we have? What does it tell us about student learning?
Focus of data conversation is on secondary symptoms of an undiscussed primary issue.	What could be the root cause of this issue?
Teacher team is celebratory and self-congratulatory about what is working.	It's great that the students are doing so well on [XYZ]. What can we apply from this success to some of the areas where students are still struggling?
Focus of data conversation shifts to sustained sentiments of helplessness and pessimism.	It's frustrating when students don't perform the way we want them to. What are some aspects we do have control over?

Source: From "10 Potential Data Discussion Pitfalls," by D. R. Venables and N. Cooperman, 2013. © 2013 by Daniel R. Venables and Teaching Matters, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Action Plan Tracking Sheet

GOAL:					
Instructional Tactic (be specific) *What will be done?*	**Tactic Method** *Specifically how will it be done?*	**Acting Party** *Who will do it?*	**Frequency** *How often will this task be done?*	**Completion Date**	**Verifying Artifacts** Which artifacts will serve as evidence that the instructional tactic has been implemented?
Evaluation Metric					