

Protocol #4

Environmental Scan: Looking for Constraints and Opportunities

Individual Notes

What aspects of your school's current organization may need attention as you begin to institute a personalized learning program? Each member should list concerns about parts of school organization that must adapt if the program is to succeed.

Group Notes (on newsprint)

Looking at the concerns that have been repeated by different members of your team, what concerns predominate?

Planning and Preparation

As you look at the concerns expressed by the whole group, what early steps should the team take to prepare the way for a personalized learning project?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

Organizational strategy

Before settling on a plan for organizing your personalized learning program, your team may want to check its priorities against a larger view of the school system at work.

- **Mission:** Some parts of conventional school systems try to balance community needs and school programs, often through the yearly budgeting cycle;
- **Systems:** Other parts of the organization aim to create the maximum level of efficiency and effectiveness in ways that affect time allocations;
- **Curriculum:** A large part of the school organization results from dividing content to create smaller departments with narrower purposes;
- **Teaching:** Departments and faculty may organize their courses around a narrow range of academic subjects or skills;
- **Advising and Mentoring:** Meaningful contact between students and teachers may result largely from relationships established in class, without a formal purpose or reliable process;
- **Learning:** Students have their own priorities and habits, including sports teams, dance classes, and jobs, which may affect scheduling during the day.

The next exercise, Protocol #5: Adapting Systems to Allow Growth, asks your team to compare your concerns to a list of factors at six levels of school organization.