Figure 3.6: Protocol for Identifying Core Competencies or Modern Literacies

Step 1	Identify the courses and subjects that the cross-curricular or multiyear team represents. Create a list of these courses and subjects for all to see.
	Define core competencies and modern literacies, and clarify key terms, possibly including examples of each, so all team members have a shared understanding of the discussion at hand.
Step 2	Invite team members to consider their content areas and identify core competencies and modern literacies. They should brainstorm a list of core competencies, modern literacies, or both that could apply to the various courses represented on the team.
	Ask team members to write each core competency or modern literacy on its own sticky note.
	After a few minutes of individual brainstorming, ask team members to place their sticky notes in a given area (such as on a table or whiteboard).
	Begin to cluster like ideas into common categories.
	Label the common categories.
	Review the categories as a large group. If anything is missing, add it. If you find redundancies, merge them or remove them.
	Note: Identifying interdisciplinary competencies or literacies requires creative thinking. So, unlike the prioritizing standards protocol where the criteria for decision making are shared in advance of selections, teams might choose to brainstorm options first and identify criteria for final selections second. If they know the criteria in advance, it can block creative thinking. Criteria most often refine thinking, not inspire it.
Step 3	Create a comprehensive set of all team members' choices.
	Display a clean set of the identified core competencies and modern literacies to walk through as a team (there will be more than two or three).
Step 4	Establish a guideline regarding the ideal number of core competencies or modern literacies the team desires to employ. Because these are robust enough to include multiple skills, teams may not want to identify more than two or three core competencies and modern literacies.
	Note: It's helpful to have a longer list of options to discuss when searching for common ground in uncommon disciplines, so limiting the number to select happens after brainstorming. Otherwise, team members stop short when brainstorming options and limit the options too early in the process.
Step 5	Prioritize the criteria, and if the team will use a voting process, establish each criterion's value by assigning it a number of points for weighting decisions later. (This step will be helpful when using the reproducible "Template for Prioritizing Standards," page 68.)

Step 6	Narrow or enhance the list in a team discussion.
	Review each core competency or modern literacy), discussing each decision-making criterion per item and noting which criteria best align with each item. Code the items to denote appropriate criteria (see the reproducible "Template for Prioritizing Standards," page 68).
	As a team, select the items (core competencies or modern literacies) that meet the greatest number of the most significant criteria.
Step 7	Identify two to three shared core competencies or modern literacies, or a combination of the two.
	Review the resulting list.
	Seek team approval of and commitment to the resulting list.
Step 8	Define each of the identified core competencies or modern literacies (see the reproducible "Template for Identifying Core Competencies or Modern Literacies," page 69).
	Identify the individual skills, components, or steps for each core competency or modern literacy. Define the steps if needed.
	Explore examples of each step or component within the individual disciplines that the team represents. This step ensures that all team members can see how the specific skills fit and can be assessed within their individual content areas.
Step 9	Document final decisions so you can share them with other teams for future discussions on vertical alignment.