



Professional Learning Communities

What Is a Professional Learning Community?

A professional learning community (PLCs) is a vehicle for an ongoing process, during which educators and partners collaborate in recurring cycles of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve.

Participating in and conducting action research together can help to strengthen partnerships and ensure that your program works toward and meets its goals.

Key Components

1. Educators, Partners and Other Stakeholders

PLCs can take many forms, and they can begin with a group of educators, partners and other stakeholders coming together or just one stakeholder group such as teachers.

2. Focus on Learning

The group focuses on the learning of every student. PLC members collaborate to clarify goals for student learning, define how learning or activity participation will be monitored, discuss student supports and interventions, and determine how to extend learning after students have achieved mastery.

3. Collaborative Culture

PLCs incorporate all stakeholders to maximize impacts for learners.

4. Collective Inquiry

PLCs arrive at consensus by building shared knowledge rather than pooling opinions. Collective inquiry means working together to find the best ways to achieve goals and meet the needs of the students and program.

5. Action Oriented

Members of PLCs are action oriented and work to turn visions into reality.

6. Committed to Continuous Improvement

PLC members continuously seek better ways to achieve goals. A PLC embraces a culture of experimentation and innovation.

7. Results Oriented

Efforts need to be assessed on results rather than intentions. Team members review assessment results and reflect on student learning and their own instructional strengths and weaknesses.

DuFour, R., DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & Many, T. (2006). [*Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work™*](#), pp. 2–4.



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Using data and information available from your program, use the following tool with your PLC team members to analyze student learning and determine how programming will be facilitated going forward.

Question 1 What do we want all students to know or be able to do? (Clarify standards and targets of focus.)	Question 2 How will we know if students have mastered the standards of focus? (Determine proficiency indicators.)
Question 3 How will we respond for students who have not yet learned? (Discuss interventions or instruction.)	Question 4 How will we respond for students who have already demonstrated mastery or are ready to do more? (Discuss extension and enrichment.)
Reflection: A When you look at the data, what differs from classroom to classroom or group to group?	
Reflection: B What are the implications of this information? Which strategies helped students learn? What skills did the work of students who met the learning goals demonstrate that set their work apart? (So what?)	
Reflection: C So what's the plan? (Now what? Who? What? When?)	

Adapted From: <http://www.allthingsplc.info/files/uploads/DataProtocol.pdf>

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