

Learning by Doing

A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work

Chapters 3 & 4 Book Study

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July 28, 2020

Reflection Form #1

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Communicating Effectively

We understand the purpose and priorities of our school because they have been communicated consistently and effectively.

Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
The school has established a clear purpose and priorities that have been effectively communicated. Systems are in place to ensure action steps aligned with the purpose and priorities are implemented and monitored.	There is no sense of purpose or priorities. People throughout the school feel swamped by what they regard as a never-ending series of fragmented, disjointed, and short-lived improvement initiatives. Changes in leadership inevitably result in changes in direction.	Key leaders may have reached agreement on general purpose and priorities, but people throughout the organization remain unclear. Furthermore, if asked to explain the priorities of the school or the strategies to achieve those priorities, leaders would have difficulty articulating specifics. Staff members would offer very different answers if pressed to explain the priorities of the school.	There is general understanding of the purpose and priorities of the school, but many staff members have not embraced them. Specific steps are being taken to advance the priorities, but some staff members are participating only grudgingly. They view the initiative as interfering with their real work.	Structures and processes have been altered to align with the purpose and priorities. Staff members are beginning to see benefits from the initiative and are seeking ways to become more effective in implementing it.	There is almost universal understanding of the purpose and priorities of the school. All policies, procedures, and structures have been purposefully aligned with the effort to fulfill the purpose and accomplish the priorities. Systems have been created to gauge progress. The systems are carefully monitored, and the resulting information is used to make adjustments designed to build the collective capacity of the group to be successful.

Reflection Form #1

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Communicating Effectively

Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
The leaders in the school communicate purpose and priorities through modeling, allocation of resources, what they celebrate, and what they are willing to confront.	There is no sense of purpose and priorities. Different people in the school seem to have different pet projects, and there is considerable infighting to acquire the resources to support those different projects.	Leaders can articulate the purpose and priorities of the school with a consistent voice, but their behavior is not congruent with their words. The structures, resources, and rewards of the school have not been altered to align with the professed priorities.	The school has begun to alter the structures, resources, and rewards to better align with the stated priorities. Staff members who openly oppose the initiative may be confronted, but those confronting them are likely to explain they are doing someone else's bidding. For example, a principal may say, "The central office is concerned that you are overtly resisting the process we are attempting to implement."	People throughout the school are changing their behavior to align with the priorities. They are seeking new strategies for using resources more effectively to support the initiative, and are willing to reallocate time, money, materials, and people in order to move forward. Small improvements are recognized and celebrated. Leaders confront incongruent behavior.	The purpose and priorities of the school are evident by the everyday behavior of people throughout the school. Time, money, materials, people, and resources have been strategically allocated to reflect priorities. Processes are in place to recognize and celebrate commitment to the priorities. People throughout the school will confront those who disregard the priorities.

Reflection Form #1

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Communicating Effectively

Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet Communicating Effectively

Indicator of a PLC at Work	What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?	Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?	What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?	What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?
<p>The school has established a clear purpose and priorities that have been effectively communicated. Systems are in place to ensure action steps aligned with the purpose and priorities are implemented and monitored.</p> <p>The leaders in the school communicate purpose and priorities through modeling, allocation of resources, what they celebrate, and what they are willing to confront.</p>				

Reflection Form #2

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Laying the Foundation

We have a clear sense of our collective purpose, the school we are attempting to create to achieve that purpose, the commitments we must make and honor to become that school, and the specific goals that will help monitor our progress.

Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
Shared Mission It is evident that learning for all is our core purpose.	The purpose of the school has not been articulated. Most staff members view the mission of the school as teaching. They operate from the assumption that although all students should have the opportunity to learn, responsibility for learning belongs to the individual student and will be determined by his or her ability and effort.	An attempt has been made to clarify the purpose of the school through the development of a formal mission statement. Few people were involved in its creation. It does little to impact professional practice or the assumptions behind those practices.	A process has been initiated to provide greater focus and clarity regarding the mission of learning for all. Steps are being taken to clarify what, specifically, students are to learn and to monitor their learning. Some teachers are concerned that these efforts will deprive them of academic freedom.	Teachers are beginning to see evidence of the benefits of clearly established expectations for student learning and systematic processes to monitor student learning. They are becoming more analytical in assessing the evidence of student learning and are looking for ways to become more effective in assessing student learning and providing instruction to enhance student learning.	Staff members are committed to helping all students learn. They demonstrate that commitment by working collaboratively to clarify what students are to learn in each unit, creating frequent common formative assessments to monitor each student's learning on an ongoing basis, and implementing a systematic plan of intervention when students experience difficulty. They are willing to examine all practices and procedures in light of their impact on learning.

Reflection Form #2

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Laying the Foundation

Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
Shared Vision We have a shared understanding of and commitment to the school we are attempting to create.	No effort has been made to engage staff in describing the preferred conditions for the school.	A formal vision statement has been created for the school, but most staff members are unaware of it.	Staff members have participated in a process to clarify the school they are trying to create, and leadership calls attention to the resulting vision statement on a regular basis. Many staff members question the relevance of the vision statement, and their behavior is generally unaffected by it.	Staff members have worked together to describe the school they are trying to create. They have endorsed this general description and use it to guide their school improvement efforts and their professional development.	Staff members can and do routinely articulate the major principles of the school's shared vision and use those principles to guide their day-to-day efforts and decisions. They honestly assess the current reality in their school and continually seek more effective strategies for reducing the discrepancy between that reality and the school they are working to create.

Reflection Form #2

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Laying the Foundation

Collective Commitments (Shared Values) We have made commitments to each other regarding how we must behave in order to achieve our shared vision.	Staff members have not yet articulated the attitudes, behaviors, or commitments they are prepared to demonstrate in order to advance the mission of learning for all and the vision of what the school might become.	Administrators or a committee of teachers have created statements of beliefs regarding the school's purpose and its direction. Staff members have reviewed and reacted to those statements. Initial drafts have been amended based on staff feedback. There is no attempt to translate the beliefs into the specific commitments or behaviors that staff will model.	A statement has been developed that articulates the specific commitments staff have been asked to embrace to help the school fulfill its purpose and move closer to its vision. The commitments are stated as behaviors rather than beliefs. Many staff object to specifying these commitments and prefer to focus on what other groups must do to improve the school.	Staff members have been engaged in the process to articulate the collective commitments that will advance the school toward its vision. They endorse the commitments and seek ways to bring them to life in the school.	The collective commitments are embraced by staff, embedded in the school's culture, and evident to observers of the school. They help define the school and what it stands for. Examples of the commitments are shared in stories and celebrations, and people are challenged when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with the collective commitments.
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Reflection Form #2

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Laying the Foundation

Indicator	Pre-Initiating	Initiating	Implementing	Developing	Sustaining
Common School Goals We have articulated our long-term priorities, short-term targets, and timelines for achieving those targets.	No effort has been made to engage the staff in establishing school improvement goals related to student learning.	Goals for the school have been established by the administration or school improvement team as part of the formal district process for school improvement. Most staff would be unable to articulate a goal that has been established for their school.	Staff members have been made aware of the long-term and short-term goals for the school. Tools and strategies have been developed and implemented to monitor the school's progress toward its goals. Little has been done to translate the school goal into meaningful targets for either collaborative teams or individual teachers.	The school goal has been translated into specific goals that directly impact student achievement for each collaborative team. If teams are successful in achieving their goals, the school will achieve its goal as well. Teams are exploring different strategies for achieving their goals.	All staff members pursue measurable goals that are directly linked to the school's goals as part of their routine responsibilities. Teams work interdependently to achieve common goals for which members are mutually accountable. The celebration of the achievement of goals is part of the school culture and an important element in sustaining the PLC process.

Reflection Form #2

The Professional Learning Communities at Work™ Continuum: Laying the Foundation

Where Do We Go From Here? Worksheet Laying the Foundation				
Indicator of a PLC at Work	What steps or activities must be initiated to create this condition in your school?	Who will be responsible for initiating or sustaining these steps or activities?	What is a realistic timeline for each step or phase of the activity?	What will you use to assess the effectiveness of your initiative?
Shared Mission It is evident that learning for all is our core purpose.				
Shared Vision We have a shared understanding of and commitment to the school we are attempting to create.				
Collective Commitments (Shared Values) We have made commitments to each other regarding how we must behave in order to achieve our shared vision.				
Common School Goals We have articulated our long-term priorities, short-term targets, and timelines for achieving those targets.				

Chapter 3: Building the Collaborative Culture of a Professional Learning Community

The Case Study: Are We Engaged in **Collaboration** or “**Co-blaboration?**”

- Case Study Overview
- Building a collaborative culture is key to improving student achievement.
- Typical team meetings tend to focus on:
 - ❖ Student behavior
 - ❖ Student attendance
 - ❖ Late work
 - ❖ Organizing upcoming events

Let's revisit this question: How is a grade level meeting different from a PLC meeting?

Principal McDonald realized that teams needed to shift the focus of their dialogues to **curriculum, assessment, and instruction.**

The Case Study: Are We Engaged in Collaboration or “Co-blaboration?”

REFLECTION:

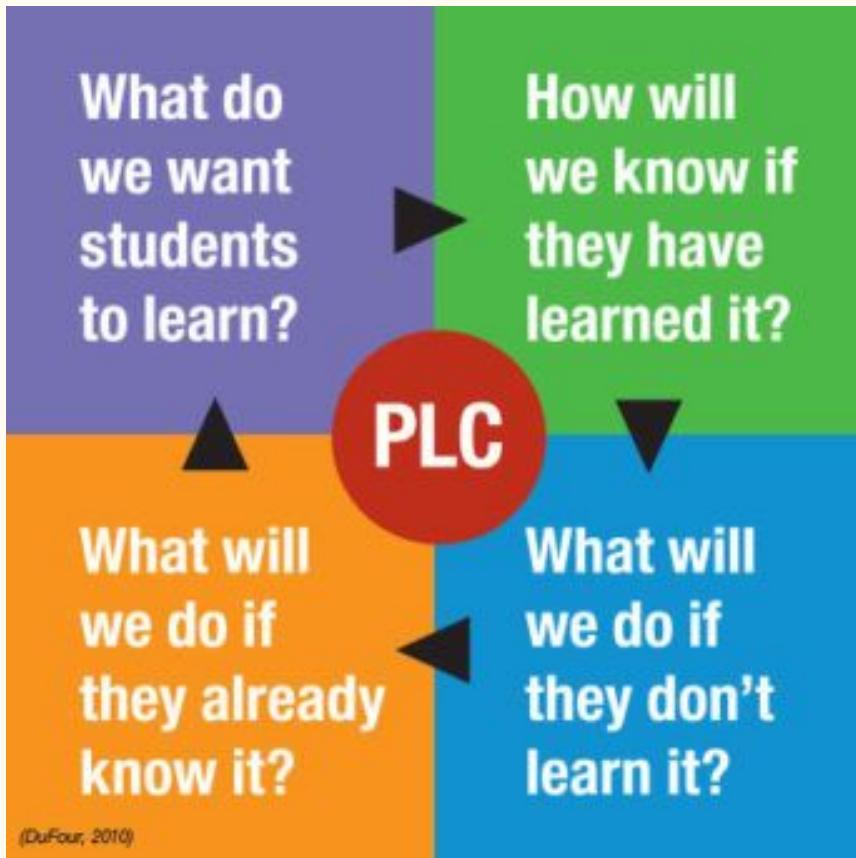
Why did Principal McDonald’s efforts to build a collaborative culture in his school go awry? What steps might he take to improve the situation?

Effective Collaboration

- The fact that teachers collaborate will do nothing to improve a school.
 - The real question is not: ***Are we collaborating?***
 - Instead, it's: ***What*** are we collaborating about?
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- The purpose of collaboration can only be accomplished if we are engaged in the right work, ***to help more students achieve at higher levels.***

Effective Collaboration

- To achieve our purpose of collaboration, our conversations should be focused on the 4 critical questions of the PLC Process.



PLC Team Structures

The best team structure for improving student achievement is a team of teachers who teach the same course/grade level.

Other team structures:

- **Vertical Teams**
 - Clarify essential outcomes for below/above grade levels
 - Make adjustments to instruction and/or pacing
- **Electronic Teams**
 - Use technology to create partnerships with colleagues across the district, state, or world
 - Conversations should be focused on what students should learn, common pacing guides, creating common assessments, student learning.
- **Interdisciplinary Teams**
 - A common structure used in middle schools where teachers work interdependently to achieve an overarching curricular goal that will result in higher levels of student learning (page 62-63 has an example using nonfiction writing within all 7th grade courses)
 - Content-area teams & grade-level teams .
- **Logical Links**
 - Specialist teachers become members of grade-level or course-specific teams that are pursuing outcomes linked to their areas of expertise (page 63 has various examples).

Collaboration

Why collaborate?

So that when you return to your classroom you will possess and utilize an expanded repertoire of skills, strategies, materials, assessments, and ideas in order to impact student achievement in a more positive way.

Some teachers would prefer not to know their strengths and weaknesses in relation to their colleagues' because it is not worth the risk of being exposed and vulnerable.

Thoughts?

Collective Commitments to Enhance the Effectiveness of Teams

- Perspective Taking
- Interpersonal understanding
- Willingness to confront
- Caring orientation
- Team self-evaluation
- Feedback
- Positive environment
- Proactive problem solving
- Organizational awareness
- Relationships

Use these Collective Commitments to Enhance the Effectiveness of Teams to create your roll out plan for your PLC

- Perspective Taking
- Interpersonal understanding
- Willingness to confront
- Caring orientation
- Team self-evaluation
- Feedback
- Positive environment
- Proactive problem solving
- Organizational awareness
- Relationships

Critical Issues for Team Consideration (page 69)

- Team Norms
 - Collective commitments that govern the group (pg.73)
 - Lone Mountain PD Norm
- SMART Goal(s) - Chapter 4 dives into this

“Individuals on effective teams learn to acknowledge mistakes, weaknesses, failures, and the need for help. They also learn to recognize and value the strengths of other team members and are willing to learn from one another.”

What stuck with you in Chapter 3?

<https://padlet.com/manuelherrera1/b99c1s8c7738epy6>



Chapter 4: Creating a Results Orientation in a Professional Learning Community

SMART Goals

To truly focus on results, every collaborative team should establish SMART goals that align with school goals.

What is a SMART Goal?

S - Strategic (aligned with the organization's goals) and specific

M - Measurable

A - Attainable

R - Results oriented

T - Time bound (when the goal will be achieved)

SMART Goals in Education

SMART Goal Examples (page 91)

1. By the end of this school year, at least 81% of the first-grade students will score at the proficient/advanced levels in mathematics as measured by our district's end-of-year mathematics assessment.
2. By the end of this school year, at least 75% of the freshman English students will earn a final grade of C or better.
3. By the end of this school year, at least 93% of the eighth-grade science students will score at the proficient/advanced levels in science as measured by our state's eighth-grade science assessment.
4. This year, 48% of the students in our school will enrol in at least one AP course. At least 75% of those students will score a 3,4,or 5 (passing scores) on the end-of-course national AP exams.

Analyzing SMART Goals

Pages 94 - 100

SMART Goal Worksheet: Page 101

Using Goals to Focus on Results (pg. 107)

1. Less is More
2. Tie all goals to district goals
3. Goal setting templates
4. Team goals rather than individual goals
5. Celebrate progress!!!!

Create a SMART Goal

School-Wide Math Goal:

Students will reflect a 5% increase in the proficiency rate in math from 60% to 65% in grades 3-5 and from 54.02% to 59.2% in grades 6-8 according to the 19-20 SBAC results.

School-Wide Reading Goal:

Students will reflect a 5% increase in the proficiency rate in ELA from 59.52% to 64.52% in grades 3-5 and from 67.16% to 72.16% in grades 6-8 according to the 19-20 SBAC results.

What stuck with you in Chapter 4?

<https://padlet.com/manuelherrera1/b99c1s8c7738epy6>

Next Meeting

Wednesday, August 5th @ 8am

Chapters: 5 & 6

Location: Champions Building