

Professional Learning Communities – Characteristics, Structural Conditions, and Supports

Characteristics of PLC	Structural Conditions that Support PLC	Support for PLC
<p>1. Shared values and norms.</p> <p>An agreed upon set of core beliefs, values, and norms provides the foundation for teaching and learning.</p>	<p>1. Time is created for collaborative work.</p> <p>Regular blocks of time during the school day devoted to professional learning and school improvement for team and task groups.</p>	<p>1. Administrators and teachers are open to improvement.</p> <p>Improvement is viewed as routine. There is support for risk-taking.</p>
<p>2. Collaborative work.</p> <p>Mutual learning and discussion of classroom practice and performance. Sharing ideas, joint planning, setting common expectations.</p>	<p>2. Physical barriers to the PLC have been neutralized when possible.</p> <p>Creation of common work spaces. Arranging for close physical proximity to encourage collaborative work.</p>	<p>2. Levels of trust and respect are high.</p> <p>Expertise is honored, and there is a sense of loyalty and commitment. There is predictability because of commonly agreed upon norms, values, and beliefs.</p>
<p>3. Deprivatization of practice.</p> <p>Practice is open. Coaching and mentoring is the norm. Teaching problems are brought to the table. Successes are displayed.</p>	<p>3. The administration and the faculty understand the interdependence of teaching roles.</p> <p>Collaborative work is predictable and recurring. Teachers plan, teach, and problem-solve together.</p>	<p>3. Leadership is supportive of the work of the PLC.</p> <p>Leader actions signify support. Leaders focus on, learn about, and become experts in the learning community.</p>
<p>4. Collective focus on student learning.</p> <p>The collective conscience of the school puts student learning first.</p>	<p>4. Teachers are empowered to work in a PLC.</p> <p>Individual autonomy is put aside in favor of group autonomy. The impact of collective decisions and work is the focus. The school too is empowered to work as an autonomous unit.</p>	<p>4.. Socialization of new teachers and administrators has been thoughtfully designed into the PLCs work.</p> <p>Orientation of new members is thorough. New members quickly know the processes and the work of the school.</p>
<p>5. Use of reflective dialogue is part of the school's culture</p> <p>Public conversations that foster self-awareness focus on teaching practice and student learning. Isolation is reduced as teachers take on a school-wide focus.</p>	<p>5. Communication structures to support collaborative work are in place.</p> <p>Structures are in place and routines have been created that foster school-wide communication.</p>	<p>5. The cognitive/skill base of the faculty is strong.</p> <p>Expertise within the faculty is valued. Sharing knowledge is the norm, and ongoing learning is routine.</p>