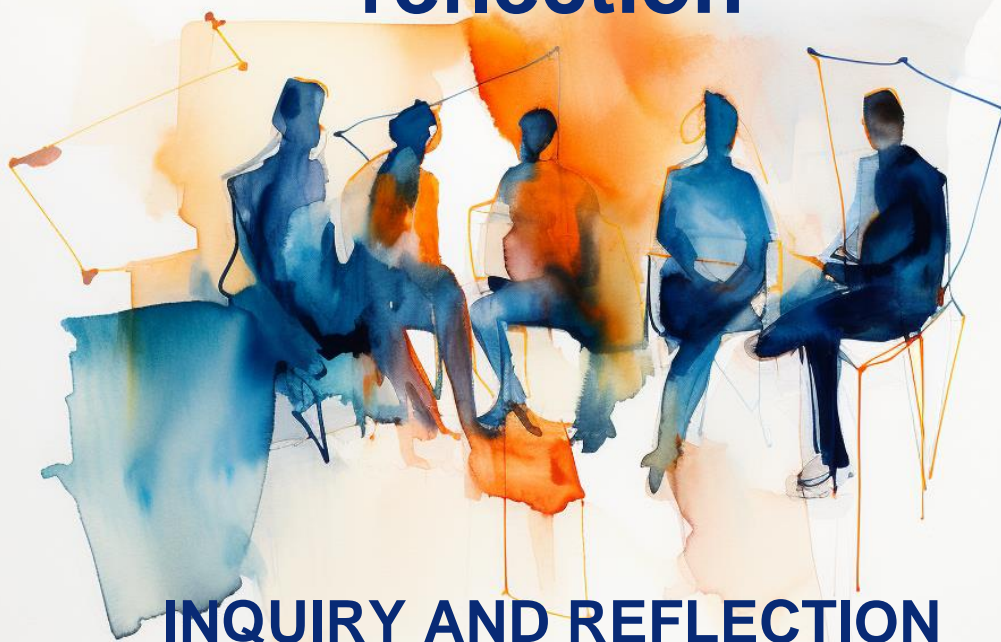




ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



INQUIRY AND REFLECTION DIMENSION

Uncovering what matters: Exploring needs and challenges

LeaFaP

Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities
in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice
KA220-SCH - Cooperation partnerships in school education

Inquiry and reflection dimension

1. Focus of the activity	Exploration of PLC participants' needs/challenges regarding the initial issue of concern/interest
2. Duration of practice	appr. 120 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Participants that start a PLC / beginning of the PLC-establishment
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To support an exploration of PLC participants' prior beliefs, needs and knowledge about the initial issue of concern ✓ To encourage communication and dialogue among the PLC members ✓ To promote a reflective awareness of commonalities and differences in beliefs, needs and knowledge among the PLC participants ✓ To support members' reflections about how this dialogue promoted possible changes or repositioning regarding the initial issue of concern
5. Description of the activity	<p>The facilitator (F) welcomes the group and allows time for members to share a few things about themselves and explain why they chose to part of this group and what they expect from their participation in the group. The F announces the common issue that brought participants together with the goal to increase their knowledge and skills through collaboration.</p> <p>F explains the importance of firstly defining specifically what are the group's concerns, reasons of these concerns and what are the strategies they are thinking at the beginning of their collaboration to confront these, and, secondly of discussing them among the group.</p> <p>Phase 1:</p> <p>F introduces tool 1 and asks PLC participants to fill it in individually writing short phrases and keywords, rather than long text. Tool 1 assists participants to describe the situation they are facing, the factors that affect it, their role in affecting the situation that concerns them and the aims in their effort to change or improve the situation.</p> <p>Phase 2:</p> <p>F asks the group to work in dyads or small groups and compare the answers they gave when completing Tool 1 based on a reflection tool (tool 2) which contains prompting questions for comparison. Participants identify commonalities and differences among their written responses given in Tool 1 by using the questions of tool 2. They also try to reason these commonalities or differences based on discussions in dyads. If questions or points for clarification and further exploration emerge from their reflective discussion, these are noted by the groups on Tool 2 while they work.</p> <p>Phase 3:</p> <p>F asks the dyads to report their findings in whole group and reason / discuss the commonalities and differences found.</p> <p>F can at the same time project tool 2 for everybody to see and completes it based on what dyads report as findings from their reflection.</p> <p>F uses prompting questions for reflection based on the differences detected by members in Tool 2. Thus, F supports reflection about why there are differences in understanding the issue of concern, the reasons attributed to its existence, the responsibility undertaken by the members (how they affect the issue of concern) and the choice of their aims. For example, a prompting question can be: What are the different factors that you have detected to affect the issue of concern? Do you agree with all of them even if you have not noted them yourselves? Why do you agree or disagree?</p> <p>F can also support a reflection upon the possible connections/relationships among the ways members responded in different questions. For example: Do you find any connection among the reasons you attributed the existence of the issue of concern and the way you responded regarding your role in affecting it? (if, for example, reasons were attributed only to external factors and not to teachers' actions, it would probably affect their negative response in how themselves affect the existence of the issue of concern).</p> <p>F also assists in summing up the results of the inquiry on their own beliefs.</p> <p>Phase 4:</p> <p>F asks members to record any repositioning / change of their initial beliefs and understandings as part of the documentation process of the PLC progress (Tool 3) and also share them with the group. Hint: if there is not enough time, the questions of Tool 3 can be used to foster reflective comments among the members only orally.</p> <p>Closure:</p> <p>F sums up the meeting and PLC members arrange time and place for next meeting convenient for all.</p>
6. PLC dimensions addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inquiry and reflection ✓ Learning and knowledge building ✓ Communication dimension
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p style="text-align: right;">Reflection and inquiry</p> <p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Techniques for facilitating productive dialogue of members

	<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Encouraging teachers to reflect on and challenge their assumptions and biases. <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commitment to fostering a reflective culture <p>Further Learning Outcomes</p> <p>Learning and knowledge building dimension</p> <p>Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Understanding of individual needs and contexts <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Assessing the specific needs and challenges of individual members <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Respect for diverse teaching beliefs and practices <p>Communication dimension</p> <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Moderating discussions to keep them focused and productive o Summarizing key points and decisions from discussions concisely and clearly.
8. Activity format	Individual, dyad/small group, whole group activities
9. Materials & tools	<p>Tool 1. An initial description of the issue of concern</p> <p>Tool 2. Reflection on commonalities/ differences in descriptions of the issue of concern</p> <p>Tool 3. Reflection on the effects of activity in affirming or revising initial beliefs</p>
10. Room & preparation	<p>Room will be arranged in Π shape that will allow both the whole team and groups to work successfully.</p> <p>Copy Tools 1 and 3 for all participants. Copy tool 2 half as many times as there are PLC members.</p>
11. Dimensions of inclusion	Diversity within a PLC: F has to make sure that diversity of beliefs and practices are accepted and held with respect by all participants. F at the same time assists participants to share their perspectives in dyads/small groups and whole group and thus encourages spaces for dialogue. F assists in summing up the common ground achieved through reflection and discussions and also record the issues that emerged for further exploration among the group.
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	Participants will have an active role to co-shape understandings. Time will be shared among participants to communicate their concerns, suggestions and proposals to achieve the goals of the activity. F pays attention to avoid criticism of any opinion heard and choose open and clarification questions to encourage dialogue.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	<p>Tools can be shared through shared online word documents in online meetings.</p> <p>Breakout rooms can be used for group work.</p>
14. References & suggested sources	
15. Appendix following	yes

Tool 1. An initial description of the issue of concern

You can use the following questions to describe the situation that concerns you, the factors that affect it, your role in the situation and the goals you want to accomplish in order to improve or change this situation. Try to be as specific as possible in your descriptions.

	Questions	Answers
DESCRIPTION	What happens in the situation that concerns you? Who does what? Why is this a problem for you?	
CAUSES	Why is this situation happening? What factors do you think play an important role in affecting this situation?	
MY ROLE	Do you influence this situation? If yes, in what ways?	
AIMS-GOALS	What would you like to improve or change in the situation described? Why do you want to improve/ make these changes?	

Tool 2. Reflection on commonalities/ differences in descriptions of the issue of concern

You can compare the answers you recorded in Tool 1 in dyads with the use of the following questions. Please fill in the chart with short notes after detecting possible commonalities and/or differences found among your answers and try to reason them.

Questions for comparison	commonalities	differences
DESCRIPTION Did you describe similarly the situation that concerns you? If yes, what are the similarities? If not, what are the differences? Why do you think there are similarities or/and differences?		
CAUSES Did you refer to similar causes or factors that influence the situation? What are the reasons for possible similarities or differences?		
MY ROLE Did you agree that you are influencing the situation or not? Why is that? Did you agree in the ways you are influencing the situation or not? Why is that?		
AIMS-GOALS Did you find similarities or differences in the goals for improving the situation? What are these and why?		

1. Did you reaffirm or validate some of your initial understandings of the chosen issue of concern after our co-operation and discussion? What are these? What assisted you in this reaffirmation of your beliefs?

2. Did you reconsider some of your initial beliefs after our co-operation and discussion? What are these? What assisted you in this reconsideration of your beliefs?

Leafap

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



Co-funded by
the European Union

Erasmus+

Enriching lives, opening minds.