



## ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



### ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION

Making it work: Organizing the what, why and how of  
effective collaboration

# LeaFaP

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

Organizational Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Organizational Elements - Organizing what, why and how?
2. Duration of practice	appr. 75 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Participants starting in a PLC
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide participants with a comprehensive understanding of the key organizational elements required for effective PLC functioning, such as scheduling, task sharing, and documentation (Understand the Importance of Organizational Elements)</li> <li>✓ Enable participants to practice strategies and apply tools that ensure that meetings remain focused, productive, and aligned with PLC goals. (Foster Practical Skills for Organizational Efficiency)</li> <li>✓ Develop an appreciation for structured and goal-oriented approaches to meeting planning and execution within the PLC. (Promote a Culture of Structured Collaboration)</li> <li>✓ Facilitate collaborative decision-making to establish a set of agreed-upon practices for managing organizational aspects (e.g., scheduling, agenda-setting, and documentation). (Create Shared Agreements on Logistical Practices)</li> </ul>
5. Description of the activity	<p><b>Introduction (5')</b></p> <p>a) F welcomes all participants and gives an overview of the agenda of the PLC-meeting to reflect the status quo of organizational elements in the collaboration towards refined structures and strategical handling of the organizational issues in the PLC in service of successful PLC-work.</p> <p>b) F gives an introductory explanation of what organizational dimensions are and why it is helpful to take joint decision about which organizational aspects to apply. F reads or reports the information from the information card (Material 1).</p> <p>c) F gives the foresight that in activity 1 the PLC participants reflect on the possible organizational aspects and decide which additionally to take on or enhance. Also, he/she tells about the follow up activity (activity 2) in which the group will monitor how well organizational aspects are practiced by then.</p> <p><b>Work phase 1: Overview of the already implemented organizational dimensions (15')</b></p> <p>a) F asks the participants to collect all organizational aspects that the group already practices. F asks them to write each aspect on a moderation card (first color) (Material 2). A few guiding questions help to exchange. They can be laid out in the middle of the table (Tool 1).</p> <p>b) F lays out the graph (Material 3) with an overview of all organizational dimensions in the middle of the table (best printed out, Din A3/A2, in color) (Material 3). F asks the group to assign the organizational aspects they collected to the respected dimension and identify which dimension they already pay attention to quite well and which ones they pay less attention to.</p> <p><b>Work phase 2: Extension of practice (30-40')</b></p> <p>a) F presents a checklist that covers all organizational aspects (Tool 2, printed out, in color). F tells the group to run through the list and decide which aspects have been realized very well already and which could be helpful new additions. F makes it transparent to the group that one target is, that all participants engage in reflecting about possible improvement of organizational aspects by jointly running through. Additional helpful questions for the group's exchange can be offered (Tool 3).</p> <p><i>Hint:</i>  <i>Even if you work with several PLCs in parallel, for example PLCs of student teachers in a class, it is helpful to take a few minutes with each group, look at the first results and make sure that they understand the chance of this step and benefit from it (gain ideas for successful organizational practice and analyze well, which practice could additionally be helpful.</i></p>

	<p>b) F instructs the group to note down ideas they plan to do better. F leads the group to note it down as concretely as possible (not just some head word). The group notes down the new steps of practice of organizational aspects on moderation cards (different color to the first, material 2). F asks the participants to group the new aspects around the first collection.</p> <p>c) F instructs the group to decide whether all new aspects will be applied right in the next meeting or whether there will be steps of development first, e.g. because something will have to be developed or set up first, like a template or a platform). If so, the group should mark the cards with A, B, C or mark them with sticky dots in three colors (Material 4).</p> <p>Activity steps and c can be combined if the group manages to consult rather concentrated.</p> <p>F initiates that the group decides how to share the possible preparatory work for the new organizational procedures they have planned. This will be captured in a to-do-list.</p> <p>d) F suggests the group takes a picture of the results on the table and the to-do-list to remember (unless F documents it in the minutes). F takes a picture of the results on the table for the preparation of activity 2 (with a camera or mobile phone) (Material 5).</p> <p><i>Hint:</i>  <i>During the group discussion, F makes sure that everyone gets involved and, if necessary, explicitly asks rather silent members for their opinion.</i>  <i>F ensures that not one person constantly repeats their own idea, since this one then will have already been recorded on a moderation card. F also notes down aspects that don't match the actual discussion but might be important for reflection later on a card of another color and puts it at the side of the picture that evolves on the table to remember.</i></p> <p><b>Closure (5')</b>          At the end of the process, F summarizes the joint achievement which should be visible on the table, too.</p>
6. PLC dimensions	<p><b>Organizational Dimension</b>          6.1 Effectively manage organizational aspects of PLC-work to ensure regular meetings and maintain the focus on tasks</p>
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p><b>According to WP2.4</b>  <b>Knowledge:</b>          o Tools and techniques that can aid in scheduling and task management.  <b>Skills:</b>          o Create and distribute agendas to keep meetings focused and productive.          o Manage time effectively during meetings to cover all planned topics.  <b>Attitudes:</b>          o Valuing structured and goal-oriented meetings.</p> <p><b>Further Learning Outcomes</b>  <b>Knowledge</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand how structured meetings contribute to effective collaboration</li> </ul> <b>Skills</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn best practices for balancing flexibility and consistency in and around meeting</li> <li>scheduling and agenda management</li> <li>Learn techniques to manage time effectively during meetings to cover all agenda items, to monitor the proceeding of the meetings and efficiently run the documentation</li> <li>Develop skills for efficiently recording meeting outcomes and decisions</li> </ul> <b>Attitudes</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committing to Inclusivity</li> <li>Develop a proactive attitude toward continuity and productivity in meetings.</li> <li>Openness to using tools and adopting new practices</li> </ul> </p>

<b>8. Activity format</b>	whole group activities
<b>9. Materials &amp; tools</b>	<p>Material 1: information card: organizational good practice for efficient PLC work</p> <p>Material 2: moderation cards in at least 3 colors &amp; pens</p> <p>Material 3: picture of the organizational dimensions (printed big, in color)</p> <p>Material 4: (non-obligatory) sticky dots in 3 colors</p> <p>Material 5: camera or mobile phone</p> <p>Tool 1: Short Questionnaire: Guiding questions for organizational aspects</p> <p>Tool 2: Check list of practice on the background of organizational dimensions</p> <p>Tool 3: Helpful Questions for the exchange about elaboration organizational aspects</p>
<b>10. Room &amp; preparation</b>	An arrangement of the furniture that accommodates a whole group discussion, best with a table
<b>11. Dimensions of inclusion</b>	<p>Participants might differ in how well structured they need a group learning situation to be, how much they need to cover new learning in a written way or how much they need methodical help to concentrate on issues and not forget time or get tired easily. Also, participants might not have easy access to digital tools or like working with them. According to time, participants might have different obligations and thus different time slots available. They might be in a working context in which a certain way of addressing people is obligatory (supervisor/head to teacher). Sometimes participation is dependent on the supervisor's permission and the supervisor wants to be informed about the results of the time spent on the PLC-work.</p> <p>Therefore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F takes into regard that not all participants get access to organizational tools easily within daily business. When the group reflects on the new steps of practice they want to apply, F needs to make sure that participants who hesitate or are skeptical are empowered to express their worry.</li> <li>• F leads the group to consider how to apply tools that can easily be handled by all.</li> <li>• F helps with the usage of digital tools or leads group members to help each other. F might also provide links to short videos with instructions.</li> <li>• F reminds the group that some participants are accountable to supervisors and need to be able to forward information about the PLC's results to the outside.</li> </ul>
<b>12. Promotion of democratic values and practices</b>	<p>Each participant has the chance to engage in the discussion, add to the ideas and how to develop quality. Each participant takes part in the decision making.</p> <p>The final agreement on organizational aspects will be run on the ideas and possibilities of all the participants. They bring in their preferred routines and plan on a jointly elaborated routine.</p>
<b>13. Appropriation for digital PLCs</b>	<p>Organizational aspects often can be well handled with digital tools like messengers for distribution, taking pictures for documentation or creating overviews by digital boards. Eventually some participants might need a short introduction on how to use the digital environment. F should offer help if needed and give ideas for preparatory activities like watching tutorials ahead of the meeting.</p> <p>Exchanging online about organizational aspects can well be done in a virtual PLC.</p> <p>It would be of help to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with a collaboration board.</li> <li>• use virtual sticky notes (comparable to Material 2), virtual coloring (comes close to Material 4).</li> <li>• include the digital picture (Material 3).</li> <li>• run the checklist on the screen with one person writing.</li> <li>• Collect lists by a white board.</li> </ul>
<b>14. References &amp; suggested sources</b>	<p>Kansteiner, K. &amp; Welther, S. (2025). Praxishandbuch für Professionelle Lerngemeinschaften in der Kooperation zwischen Kitas sowie Kitas und Grundschulen. Weinheim: Beltz</p> <p><a href="https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/fruehpaedagogik/produkte/details/55218-praxishandbuch-professionelle-lerngemeinschaften-in-kita-und-kita-grundschul-kooperationen.html">https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/fruehpaedagogik/produkte/details/55218-praxishandbuch-professionelle-lerngemeinschaften-in-kita-und-kita-grundschul-kooperationen.html</a> (in German)</p> <p><a href="https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-gruppenorganisation/">https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-gruppenorganisation/</a> (in German)</p>
<b>15. Appendix</b>	Yes

## APPENDIX

### Material 1: Information Card: Organizational good practice for efficient PLC work

The Organizational Dimension addresses the logistical aspects of managing a PLC, including scheduling, progress monitoring and documentation. A good organization creates structure at different levels and thus supports the collaboration. Caring for a good organization initially takes time but then facilitates collaboration and helps to proceed efficiently. For example, appointments will be set on time, all participants know what to expect and what time frame leads them. Quick overviews are easy at hand and there is a common organizational basis on which the group builds, and all can rely on.

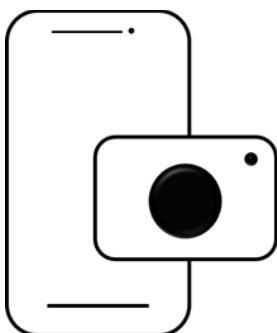
### Material 2: Moderation Cards



### Tool 1: Short Questionnaire: Guiding Questions for Organizational Aspects

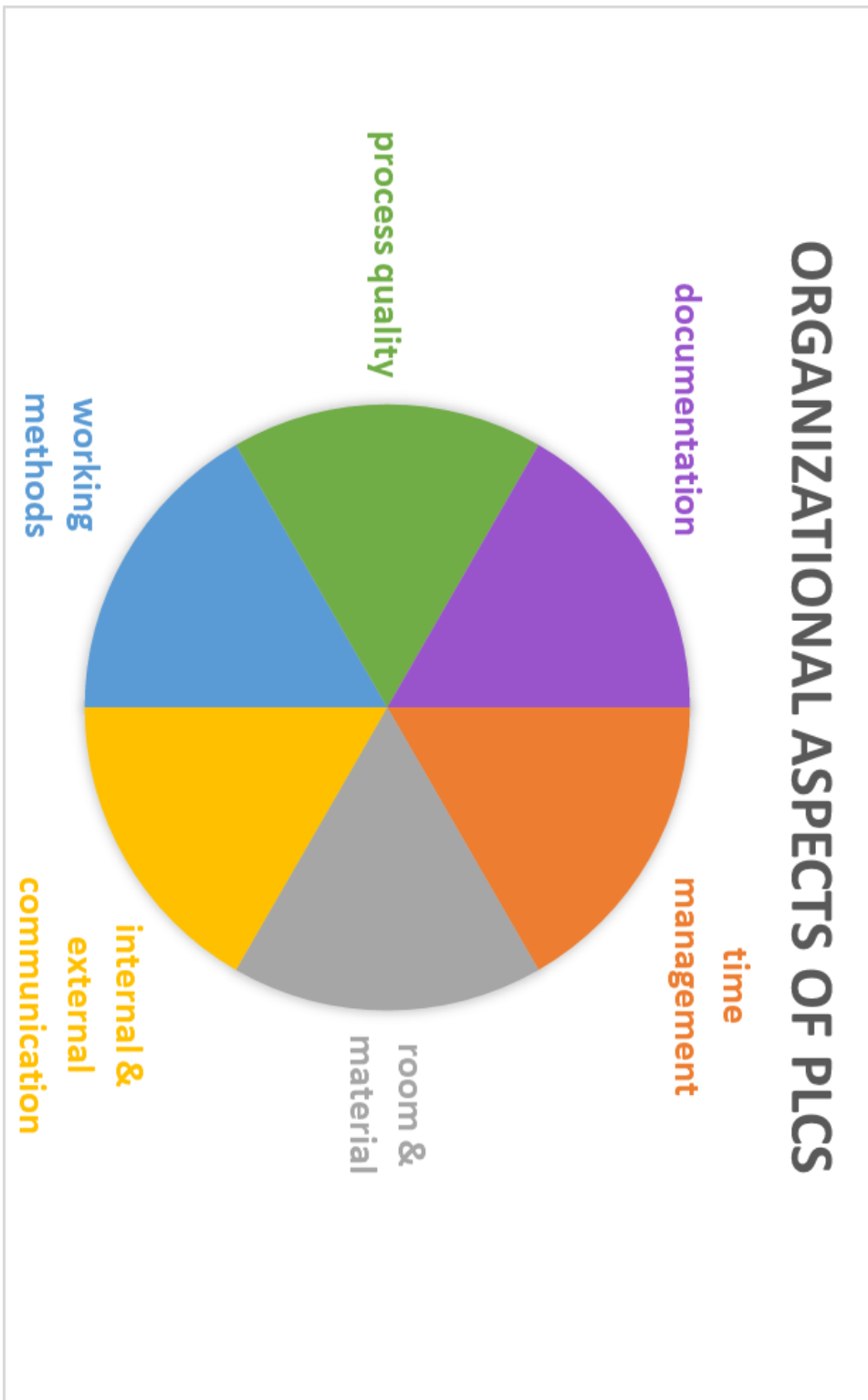
#### Guiding Questions for Organizational Aspects

- a) Which aspects do we already practice?
- b) How are they organized, e.g. ...
  - ... what agreements have we made until to now?
  - ... how did these come about?
  - ... how specifically are the aspects defined?
- c) If we take a first look at the implementation of organizational aspects in our PLC, how satisfied are we with it?

**Material 4: Sticky Dots****Material 5: Camera/Mobile Phone**



Material 3: Picture of the Organizational Dimensions



Tool 2: Check List Organizational Aspects

Dimension	Practiced yes	Improvement needed? How to pursue?	Not practiced	New application? How to pursue
<b>Time Management</b>				
period, steps, time slots				
consulting about time aspects				
role to watch the time during meeting				
handling time strictly or flexible				
<b>Room and Material</b>				
equipment for moderation				
methods and material				
online platform				
furniture/catering				



Communication to the inside and outside				
how to address the others				
conversation techniques				
contact person of the group				
dealing with outside disruptions during the meeting				
handling personal information,				
sharing material, information, documentation				
helping the others, collaborating				
external appearance of the group				
forwarding information to the outside				
email-list, messenger				
data protection other people				

Working Methods				
topics spontaneous vs. planed				
working with moderation cards				
focus only by exchange or methods				
stock up unfinished topics for later exchange				
implementing tools				
Process Quality				
identify and implement goals before exchanging				
progress monitoring				
in-between stop to reflect status quo and how to proceed				
reflect on improvement of organizational aspects				

Documentation				
documentation, process and results				
media for documentation				
responsibility for setting up/using documentation				
Quality of documentation				

Tool 3: Helpful Questions for the exchange about elaboration organizational aspects

#### Helpful questions for the group exchange

1. Which listed aspect do we practice already and how consequently?
2. What exactly is intended to be achieved by each organizational aspect? Does it lead us to it?
3. Does the way we practice it serve our progression, saves us time, helps us to get to the point, helps us to involve all and safes us from unnecessary discussions?
4. What materials, instruments, etc. are additionally required for some of the aspects?
5. Which aspect must be firmly agreed upon, which aspect has scope for everyone to design it in a way that they want?

# Leafap

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