



Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Activities to support their establishment and development



Leafap

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

Sofia Avgitidou, Rosa Arcos, Elvira Barrios, José Luis Carmona, Alberto Corpas, María del Mar Gallego, Anne Berit Emstad, Eva Frick, Moschoula Georgalli, Katja Kansteiner, Bård Knutsen, Loucas Louca, Karl Peböck, Katharine Rümmele, Carmen Sanchidrián, Thomas Schroffenegger, Peter Theurl, Mónica Torres-Sánchez, Sabine Welther

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Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Activities to support their establishment and development

Preface

As part of our Erasmus+ project **LEAFAP**, we have created a rich collection of practical and engaging activities designed to support everyone involved in building and nurturing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

These activities aim to inspire meaningful professional dialogue, encourage collaborative learning, and promote inquiry-based and reflective professional growth. Whether you are just beginning to establish a PLC or looking to strengthen an existing one, these materials support your journey.

The activities have been carefully designed and piloted by the project partners together with head teachers, teachers, student teachers, school advisors, teacher trainers, and university lecturers. Based on their valuable experiences and feedback, the materials have been revised and finalized so that you can confidently adapt and use them in your own professional learning context.

To make exploration easier, the activities are organized around seven key dimensions that are essential for effective facilitation of professional learning communities: [Relational](#), [Communication](#), [Collaboration](#), [Learning and Knowledge Building](#), [Inquiry and Reflection](#), [Organizational](#), and [Digital](#).

Each activity informs about the goals, expected learning outcomes, step-by-step processes, and supporting materials that can be used during both the creation and the ongoing development of a PLC. In addition, practical tools for inquiry, reflection, and design are provided in the appendix of each activity.

All resources are freely available for non-commercial use and can be adapted for both face-to-face and online PLC settings. We warmly invite teachers, school leaders, trainers, and educators across Europe to explore these materials, and make them part of their own collaborative learning practices.

We hope these resources will encourage inspiring conversations, strengthen professional connections, and support reflective, inquiry-driven school development.

Here is a list of all activities organized across the seven dimensions

Relational Dimension

Title of activity	Responsible partner	Authored by:
Laying the foundation: Building trust and collaboration in our PLC	Centro del Profesorado de Málaga, Spain	María del Mar Gallego & José Luis Carmona
Walk in my shoes: Mapping emotions to grow empathy	European University Cyprus	Loucas Louca & Moschoula Georgalli
Openness begins with one—and grows with many	Centro del Profesorado de Marbella - Coín, Spain	Rosa Arcos, Alberto Corpas
Meta in motion: From talking to thinking about talking	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway	Anne Berit Emstad & Bård Knutsen

Communication dimension

Title of activity	Responsible partner	Authored by:
The power of questions: Navigating misunderstandings and sparking insight	University of Malaga, Spain	Elvira Barrios, Mónica Torres-Sánchez, & Carmen Sanchidrián

Collaborative dimension

Title of activity	Responsible partner	Authored by:
Knowledge map: Making our strengths visible	University of Education Vorarlberg, Austria	Katharine Rümmele, Peter Theurl, Eva Frick, Karl Peböck, Thomas Schroffenegger

Learning and Knowledge-building dimension

Title of activity	Responsible partner	Authored by:
Reflect, choose, evolve: Evaluating actions through inquiry	Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway	Anne Berit Emstad & Bård Knutsen

Reflection and inquiry dimension

Title of activity	Responsible partner	Authored by:
Uncovering what matters: Exploring needs and challenges	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece	Sofia Avgitidou
Beyond the question: Verifying the effectiveness of clarifying and probing questions	University of Malaga, Spain	Elvira Barrios, Carmen Sanchidrián, & Mónica Torres-Sánchez
Explore. Reflect. Decide: Building an informed PLC culture	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece	Sofia Avgitidou
From actions to insights: Unpacking classroom incidents	European University Cyprus	Loucas Louca & Moschoula Georgalli

Organizational dimension

Title of activity	Responsible partner	Authored by:
Making it work: Organizing the what, why, and how of effective collaboration	University of Education Weingarten, Germany	Katja Kansteiner, Sabine Welther
Getting organized: How far have we come?	University of Education Weingarten, Germany	Katja Kansteiner, Sabine Welther

Digital dimension

Title of activity	Responsible partner	Authored by:
Human connection in digital spaces: Engaging online PLCs	University of Education Vorarlberg, Austria	Thomas Schroffenegger, Karl Peboeck, Peter Theurl, Katharine Rümmele, Eva Frick
Working smarter together: Digital strategies for team success	Centro del Profesorado de Málaga, Spain	María del Mar Gallego & José Luis Carmona
Tidy up, tune in: Decluttering for a more focused virtual PLC	Centro del Profesorado de Marbella - Coín, Spain	Alberto Corpas, Rosa Arcos



The resources, reports and educational materials have been produced within the program titled “Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities in schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective practice” (LEAFAP), having European Union as the funding body. All materials are licenced under [Creative Commons Attribution - Non Commercial - Share Alike 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

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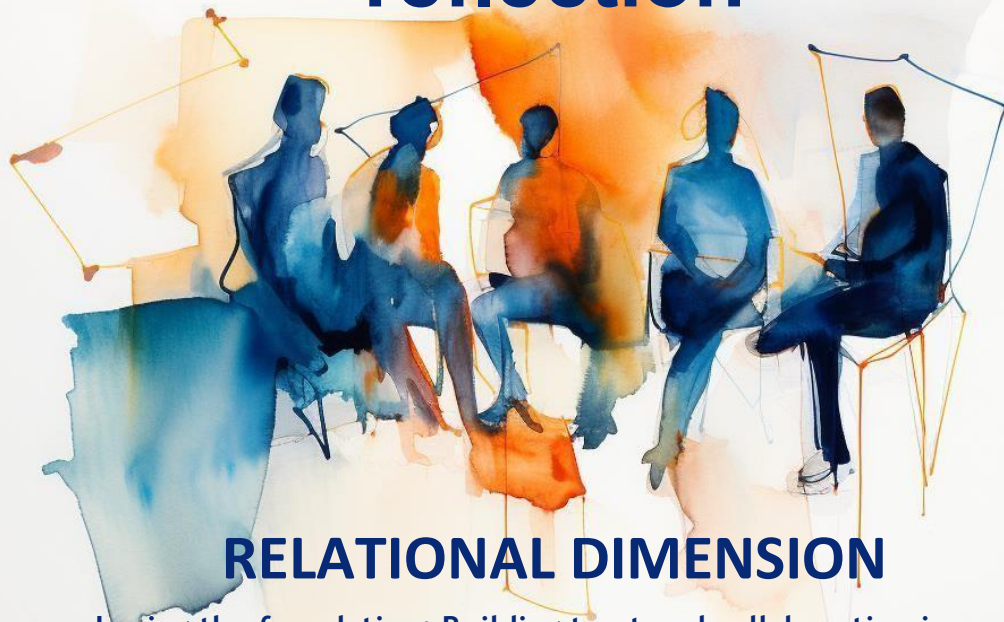
You can cite each activity by using the name of the authors and titles of the activities and then add: (2025). *Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Activities to support their establishment and development*. Erasmus+ Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities in Schools towards an Inquiry- based and Reflective Practice. <https://www.leafap.eu/>

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Erasmus+ Project LeaFaP

ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



RELATIONAL DIMENSION

Laying the foundation: Building trust and collaboration in our
PLC

LeaFaP

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

Relational Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Building connections: Initial activity to strengthen interpersonal relationships and collaboration among members of a PLC (Facilitators)
2. Duration of practice	120 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Participants starting in a PLC
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote relational competence in the workplace, emphasizing its importance for leading, managing relationships, effective communication, and maintaining healthy connections with PLC members to cooperate and resolve conflicts through an inquiry-based and critical reflection approach. ✓ Encourage individual reflective practice as a prior resource to foster dialogue and cooperation within a PLC. ✓ Identify strengths and areas for improvement among PLC members through effective communication, clear expression of ideas and feelings as well as the active listening in group and in personal interactions. ✓ Foster empathy among team members by promoting the understanding and recognition of others' emotions and perspectives. ✓ Improve conflict management skills, training facilitators to resolve disagreements constructively, avoid tensions, and promote mutually beneficial solutions. ✓ Encourage cooperation and teamwork, promoting respectful collaboration that values each group member's ideas and contributions. ✓ Develop interpersonal flexibility, cultivating empathy to adapt to various contexts, relational styles, and emotional needs in educational environments in a respectful manner.
5. Description of the activity	<p>This proposal consists of three activities, each with a specified duration. It is recommended to carry them out consecutively, which would total 140 minutes. As a whole, it integrates inquiry and critical reflection within a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to enhance relationships and educational practices. At the end of the three activities, a phase of implementation and ongoing evaluation is carried out.</p> <p>Activity 1: Inquiry and Exploration of Context (Estimated time: 30 - 35 minutes) The goal is to develop effective communication skills and empathy by exploring participants' past experiences. Facilitators, organized into small groups, discuss previous experiences with communication (in an educational context). Through inquiry-based questions, they identify elements of effective communication and the obstacles they faced (15-20 minutes). After that, they share and reflect in a plenary discussion, for 15 minutes (TOOL 1). It is essential to create a comfortable and relaxed environment that encourages inquiry, active listening, and clear, empathetic communication, fostering the understanding of different perspectives within the team.</p> <p>Activity 2: Critical Reflection on Conflict Management (Estimated time: 35 minutes) This activity strengthens conflict management skills through critical reflection on past situations, facilitating the development of new practices for constructive conflict resolution. A hypothetical situation about a conflict within the team is presented (5 minutes). Facilitators individually reflect on how they would handle it, for 10 minutes. Then, they discuss various strategies for addressing it constructively (20 minutes). Reflective questions are used to assess behavior patterns and generate more effective alternatives (TOOL 2).</p> <p>Activity 3: Collective Construction of New Knowledge (Estimated time: 30 minutes) A collaborative activity is designed to foster cooperation. The objective is to work as a team and adjust the solutions created to improve professional relationships, promoting the collective development of new practices. Facilitators, in teams (15 minutes), design an activity to improve the relational climate of their educational context, integrating the skills developed in the previous phases</p>

	<p>(communication, empathy, conflict management). Finally, each team presents its proposal to the group, adapting it according to the feedback received (15 minutes).</p> <p>Phase of Implementation and Continuous Evaluation (Estimated time: 25 minutes)</p> <p>This final phase intends to promote a cycle of action-reflection for continuous improvement in relational practices. Facilitators can implement collaborative plans in their teams, which will later be analyzed in a reflection session.</p> <p>As a concluding activity, a poster is created where each member answers questions summarizing the process and offers alternatives. The dynamic is as follows: 5 minutes are given for participants to think and write their responses on sticky notes, then each person places them in the reserved space on the poster (around 5 minutes). Finally, the responses are discussed reflexively and collectively, with a focus on identifying areas for improvement for 15 minutes (TOOL 3).</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Through its various phases, this activity integrates inquiry and critical reflection to enhance interpersonal relationships and foster a collaborative approach in transforming professional practices by developing relational skills. Participants will be able to improve their team interactions, as well as their leadership and management abilities.</p>
<p>6. PLC dimensions addressed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relational competence. ✓ Shared learning and knowledge. ✓ Inquiry and reflection. ✓ Collaborative dimensión. <p>In summary, it is essential to work on strategies for building trust and empathy in group settings, as they foster positive interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal skills, such as empathy and respect, should be demonstrated through verbal and non-verbal language, while responding appropriately to the emotional signals of group members. Activities that promote respect and openness within the Professional Learning Community (PLC) should be implemented, along with creating and maintaining a safe space for all members. On the other hand, a collaborative culture will be promoted, encouraging active listening, interpersonal communication, and fostering cooperation.</p>
<p>7. Learning outcomes for the participants</p>	<p><u>What knowledge will the participants develop?</u></p> <p>Participants will develop an initial understanding of relational competence, focusing on effective communication, empathy, constructive conflict management, and valuing diverse perspectives. They will also learn strategies for critical reflection to identify team behavior patterns and explore conflict resolution alternatives.</p> <p>Thus, the learning outcomes for each of the dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relational competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role-playing to practice empathy, conflict resolution, and effective communication. - Self-awareness and emotional management exercises to improve relational skills. • Shared learning and knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work groups where each member contributes their knowledge and experience. • Inquiry and reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Socratic questioning (open questions) to encourage deep reflection. - Reflective journal on experiences and learnings for critical analysis. • Active listening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paraphrasing technique to ensure correct understanding. - Dedicated speaking time for each person without interruptions. • Interpersonal communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-violent communication to express emotions and needs without judgment. - Constructive feedback to offer useful guidance for improvement. • Cooperation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project-based learning, distributing tasks and responsibilities.

	<p><u>What skills will the participants develop?</u></p> <p>Participants will enhance key abilities such as: the ability to actively listen, empathy, conflict management, and clear communication. They will also acquire critical reflection skills to adapt their approaches based on group dynamics and challenges.</p> <p>Skills according to dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relational competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing empathy. - Conflict management in group interactions. • Shared learning and knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adapting approaches based on group dynamics and challenges. - Improving teamwork through reflection and adaptation. • Inquiry and reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Critical reflection on personal practices. - Analysis of group dynamics and adjustment of strategies. • Active listening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved active listening for more effective communication. • Interpersonal communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practicing clear and effective communication. - Using tools to express ideas and resolve conflicts. • Cooperation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing the ability to collaborate in teams. <p><u>What attitudes will the participants develop?</u></p> <p>Participants will acquire attitudes of openness and respect towards diverse opinions and experiences, fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. They will also develop a disposition for self-reflection and continuous improvement, as well as a proactive attitude towards conflict resolution.</p> <p>Attitudes according to dimensions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relational competence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect for diverse opinions and experiences. - Proactive attitude towards conflict resolution. • Shared knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to collective learning. - Inclusive attitude that promotes collaboration. • Inquiry and reflection: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Willingness for constant self-reflection. - Critical attitude towards group dynamics. • Active listening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open and attentive listening, valuing others' contributions. - Empathy as the foundation of active listening. • Interpersonal communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear and assertive communication of ideas and emotions. - Respectful expression of opinions, creating a safe space for all. • Cooperation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative attitude, prioritizing team success over individual interests. - Willingness to adapt to group needs and challenges, working to strengthen team cohesion and effectiveness.
<p>8. Activity format</p>	<p>Individual, pair and group activities.</p>
<p>9. Materials & tools</p>	<p>Tool 1: Inquiry Question Table. Tool 2: Reflective Questions Table on Behaviors. Tool 3: Reflecting on Our Practices: More, Less, Start, Stop, and Keep doing.</p>



10. Room & preparation	The chairs and tables in the room will be arranged in a circle to make both oral and visual communication easier. Participants will also be provided with tools in photocopied sheets.
11. Dimensions of inclusion	<p>The dimension of inclusion is developed comprehensively throughout the phases and activities described, focusing on ensuring that all voices and perspectives are valued, respected, and considered.</p> <p>Equitable participation ensures that all facilitators express their ideas while valuing diverse perspectives to foster mutual understanding. Active listening and empathy help each member feel respected, and conflict management is approached inclusively and collaboratively.</p> <p>Collective creation and adaptability integrate all voices into decision-making, while critical reflection helps identify and transform potential exclusions. Finally, constructive feedback promotes a culture of learning and continuous improvement.</p>
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<p>In the inquiry and reflection activity described, several values and democratic practices essential for teamwork and the educational field are developed. Below are some of these values and practices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active participation and equity. 2. Active listening and dialogue. 3. Empathy and respect for diversity. 4. Peaceful conflict resolution. 5. Cooperation and collective construction. 6. Critical reflection and responsibility. 7. Transparency and constructive feedback.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	<p>For this format, a virtual session should be established using a platform such as Webex, Zoom, Meet, etc. This general session can link to small breakout rooms for working in smaller teams.</p> <p>To showcase results, interactive "bulletin board" tools such as Padlet, Microsoft Whiteboard, Lucid Spark, etc., can be used.</p>
14. References & suggested sources	Project documents created: Reports, Results, Guide. The tools are of our own creation.
15. Appendix following	Yes. See the tools detailed below.

APPENDIX

TOOL 1: INQUIRY QUESTION TABLE

The following table provides five possible inquiry questions to facilitate Activity 1: Inquiry and Context Exploration. The idea is for each participant to respond to them individually, and then share their answers as explained in the phase development.

These questions will help participants reflect on their experiences of communication, empathy, and emotional management, allowing them to identify areas for improvement and develop key skills in their relational competence.

TOOL 1: INQUIRY QUESTION TABLE		
QUESTION	GOAL	ANSWER
How did you feel when you tried to communicate an important idea in an educational or work context, and how do you think that emotion impacted the effectiveness of your communication?	Explore the connection between emotions and effective communication.	
What obstacles did you encounter when trying to understand others' viewpoints in that situation? What do you think you could have done to improve mutual understanding?	Study in more detail the challenges of practicing empathy in communication	
How did people react to your message in that situation? Was there any difference between what you wanted to express and what others understood?	Reflect on potential misunderstandings and how to improve the clarity of the message	
What strategies did you use to manage emotions (yours or others') during the interaction? Do you think they were effective? Why?	Investigate emotional management and its impact on communication	
When you listened to others' perspectives, how did it influence your approach to the conversation? What did you learn about the value of active listening in that situation?	Explore the role of active listening in fostering empathetic understanding.	



TOOL 2: REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TABLE ON BEHAVIORS

The following table provides three possible inquiry questions to facilitate Activity 2: Critical Reflection on Conflict Management. The idea is for each participant to respond to them individually, and then share their answers as explained in the phase development.

TOOL 2: REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS TABLE ON BEHAVIORS		
QUESTION	GOAL	ANSWER
What were the reactions or behavior patterns you observed in yourself or others during previous conflict management, and how did those behaviors influence the resolution of the conflict?	Identification of patterns: Facilitate participants in recognizing their own behaviors and those of their peers in conflict management.	
What strategies or approaches could you have used to address the conflict more constructively, and how might these changes have impacted relationships within the team?	Exploration of alternatives: Encourage facilitators to consider new strategies for addressing conflicts constructively and reflect on how these changes can improve team relationships.	
What communication and active listening practices could you implement in future situations to prevent the escalation of conflicts and promote a collaborative environment?	Fostering Effective Communication: Encourage the adoption of communication and active listening practices to prevent future conflicts and create a collaborative and positive environment.	

TOOL 3: REFLECTING ON OUR PRACTICES: MORE (OF), LESS (OF), START, STOP, AND KEEP DOING

This dynamic corresponds to Phase of Implementation and Continuous Evaluation: Implementation and Continuous Evaluation, where the reflective and continuous improvement approach is facilitated through a series of prompts in the form of sentence beginnings. Each participant individually considers these prompts and then writes their responses on colored sticky notes.

Participants are given 10 minutes to think and write their answers on the sticky notes. Once the responses are written, each participant places their notes in the designated space on the poster (which takes about 5 minutes). Finally, the responses are discussed reflectively and collectively, aiming to identify common areas for improvement and reinforce positive points. The prompts are as follows:

- More of...
- Less of...
- Start to do...
- Stop doing...
- Keep doing...

Each response to the prompts will be thought through individually by the participants and written on sticky notes, which can be in various colors depending on the questions or prompts.

The format of the poster where the sticky notes will be placed is as follows:

(Here, a visual design or scheme can be included to separate sections for each prompt, facilitating the placement of responses.)

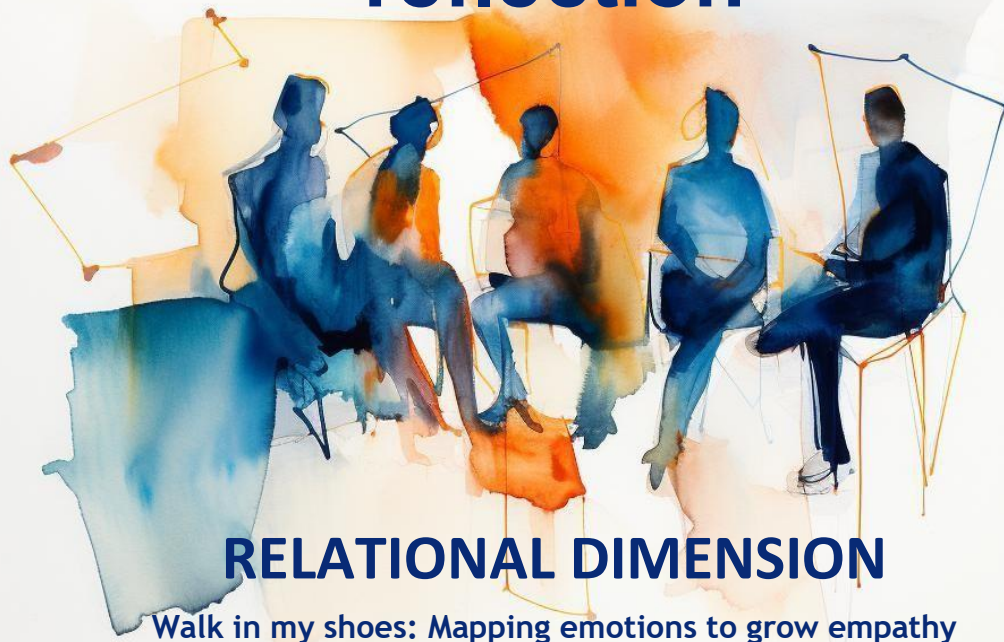


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ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



RELATIONAL DIMENSION

Walk in my shoes: Mapping emotions to grow empathy

LeaFaP

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Relational Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Exploring Empathy Through Emotional Mapping: Building attitude of PLC participants' regarding Empathy
2. Duration of practice	75 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Some participants have been in a PLC before and some participants have no prior experience of a PLC. Participants are at the beginning of the PLC-establishment stage.
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To encourage understanding of others' perspectives within interactions. ✓ To promote visualization techniques to deepen understanding of others emotional perspectives. ✓ To support the development of reflective awareness on empathy as a skill for professional growth.
5. Description of the activity	<p>This activity guides participants through analyzing a character's emotional journey in selected video clips. It uses structured prompts, visual mapping, and reflective discussions to develop empathy skills relevant to fostering positive and trusting relationships within Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #00a65a; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Empathy is the ability to comprehend another person's experiences and emotions without judgment. It's like stepping into someone else's shoes seeing things from their perspective. (Eisenberg & Strayer, 1990; Clark, 2010; Coplan & Goldie, 2011).</p> </div> <p>Introduction: The facilitator (F) introduces the concept of empathy (emphasizing empathy as an active, shared understanding of another's perspective) and its relevance to building trusting relationships within PLCs. F explains that participants will explore empathy by analyzing characters' emotional journeys through video clips, examining the characters' feelings, thoughts, and actions.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #00a65a; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Empathy is essential for PLCs because it promotes trust, inclusivity, and meaningful collaboration. By valuing and understanding each other's perspectives, PLC members can work together more effectively to create an environment that supports professional growth, shared goals, and improved outcomes.</p> </div> <p>Warm-Up: Interpreting Subtle Emotions (5-7 mins)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a photo, short gif, or silent video clip displaying a subtle emotion (e.g., awkwardness, quiet excitement). • Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "What emotion might this person be feeling?" o "What clues do you notice in their face, body, or environment?" • Facilitate a brief discussion to highlight emotional nuance and cultural variation in emotional expression. <p>• Phase 1 - Video Observation: F Selects four video clips from Appendix 1: Suggested Video Clips (Includes list of video clips with descriptions) and provide instructions: "Watch the clips, focusing on a single character's experience. Pay close attention to verbal and non-verbal cues that reveal one character's emotions" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Participants watch the clips, focusing on a single character's experience. </p> <p>• Phase 2 - Emotional Mapping: F dsistribste the Emotional Mapping Prompt Sheet (Appendix 2- Includes a structured prompt sheet for participants to note observations during the reflection phase) to guide individual reflection. F provides the instructions: Please answer individually the following prompts individually to identify one character's perspective on : Emotional Mapping Prompt Sheet -(Appendix 2: Provides structured prompts for noting observations). F Provides a completed example for clarity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is the character feeling? (Observe emotional cues and body language.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o What is the character hearing? (Identify sounds or dialogues influencing mood.) o What is the character saying? (Record notable phrases or expressions.) o What is the character doing? (Describe actions that reflect emotions.) <p>Each participant answers these questions individually, identifying verbal and non-verbal cues that convey the character’s perspective and experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 3 - Visual Mapping: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F explains how to visually represent the character’s emotional journey using templates from Appendix 2- (Provides detailed templates for creating visual maps), allowing flexibility in design based on participants’ preferences. Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Use one of the following formats to map the emotional journey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Mind Map: Center the main emotion and branch out to related actions, words, and influences. □ Flow Chart: Show the progression of the character’s emotions over time. □ Diagram with Symbols: Use shapes or symbols (e.g., hearts for emotions, arrows for actions) to depict the journey. Participants transfer their insights into a visual format (e.g., map, diagram, or flowchart) to create a “map” of the character’s emotional journey, including key thoughts, feelings, and actions that convey empathy • F Provide samples of visuals representation and underlines that the participants could use digital or hand-drawn formats. • Phase 4 - Dyad Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F pairs participants for a dyad discussion to exchange visual maps and insights using Appendix 4: Pair Discussion Questions (Includes prompts to guide meaningful exchanges). Instructions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Share your visual map with your partner and discuss: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ What similarities or differences did you notice in your observations compared to your partner’s? □ How did the character’s emotions influence their actions? □ Did you feel empathy towards the character? Why? □ What new insights did your partner’s observations provide about the character’s experience? <p>Each participant also reads one reflection from their partner, noting any new insight gained from their partner’s interpretation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 5 - Whole Group Discussion : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> F prompts participants to share key takeaways from both their individual and paired reflections, highlighting the value of empathy . Leading reflection questions, : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What new insight did your partner give you? • What surprised you in this process? • How does this help you understand empathy in your role as a teacher or professional? • What new insights did you gain about empathy through this activity? • What can we carry forward from this exercise in understanding and applying empathy in our daily interactions? • What practical steps can you take to apply empathy skills in your daily interactions? • How can empathy mapping become a tool for professional and personal growth? • How can these insights inform your interactions within PLCs?
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	<p>Closure:</p> <p>F Ask each participant to share one way they can apply empathy mapping in their future practice and summarizes reflections from the group, emphasizing what the group has developed from the activity and the relational importance of empathy in collaborative work, highlight the importance of applying these skills to foster understanding and collaboration.</p>
6. PLC dimensions addressed	Relational dimension :Promote empathy, respect, and trust-building among PLC members
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Trust- and empathy-building strategies and their importance in group settings. <p>• Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Demonstrate interpersonal skills, including empathy and respect, through verbal and non-verbal cues. o Respond to emotional cues communicated by group members appropriately. o Conduct activities that foster respect and openness among the PLC members. o Create and maintain a safe space within the community. <p>• Attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commitment to fostering positive and trusting relationships.
8. Activity format	Individual, pair and group activities.
9. Materials & tools	<p>Tool 1:Reflection questions for emotional mapping</p> <p>Tool 2: Appendices forms</p> <p>Tool 3:Chart paper, markers, or digital tools for visual mapping</p>
10. Room & preparation	Arrange the room in a U-shape to support both dyad and group discussions. Prepare materials for mapping and ensure the video clip is accessible.
11. Dimensions of inclusion	<p>F ensures all interpretations are respected, with participants encouraged to listen empathetically and appreciate diverse perspectives. The activity fosters a fully inclusive environment where participants feel respected, valued, and empowered to contribute, regardless of their empathic abilities, confidence levels, or communication styles.</p> <p>1.Equitable Participation: F ensures all voices are heard by monitoring discussions and inviting quieter participants:“Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet; every perspective adds to our understanding.”</p> <p>2. Adapting to Diverse Empathic Levels: F provides guidance to help participants engage meaningfully during activity phases: o For beginners: “Focus on gestures, tone, or expressions—small details often reveal emotions.” o For advanced participants: “How might these emotions connect to unspoken motivations?”</p> <p>3. Respecting Communication Styles: Tools like visual templates and mapping sheets allow participants to express insights in diverse ways. F validates contributions by saying: “Let’s honor all the ways we make sense of the character’s journey—words, visuals, or symbols.”</p> <p>4. Safe, Reflective Space: F models open-ended, non-judgmental language and addresses interruptions neutrally: “That’s an interesting perspective; let’s hear how you arrived at that observation.” “Let’s allow [participant’s name] to finish before responding.”</p> <p>5. Valuing Diversity: F summarizes inclusively to highlight varied perspectives: “Some of us noticed body language, others tone or actions—this shows how empathy is multi-layered.”</p>

<p>12. Promotion of democratic values and practices</p>	<p>The activity actively promotes democratic values such as equity, open dialogue, collaboration, and shared decision-making, fostering a respectful and participatory environment.</p> <p>1. Equity and Participation: F balances contributions by inviting quieter voices: “Let’s pause and hear reflections from those who haven’t spoken yet—every perspective matters.”</p> <p>2. Open Dialogue and Respectful Exchange: F encourages exploration over debate and addresses disagreements constructively: “We’re not judging who’s right or wrong; let’s explore both viewpoints to enrich our understanding.”</p> <p>3. Collective Reflection: F facilitates shared meaning-making by summarizing inclusively: “By sharing our observations, we’ve seen how empathy can be understood in multiple ways.”</p> <p>4. Transparency and Continuous Improvement: Constructive feedback is exchanged without criticism: “What new insights did your partner’s reflection give you?” F highlights shared accountability: “By hearing all perspectives, we’ve built a collective understanding—let’s reflect on how we apply this daily.”</p> <p>5. Peaceful Conflict Resolution: F models neutral language to encourage learning from differences: “It’s okay to see things differently; what can we learn by exploring both perspectives together?”</p>
<p>13. Appropriation for digital PLCs</p>	<p>Video clips and visual maps can be shared digitally; breakout rooms facilitate dyad discussions, and tools like Padlet or digital mind maps enable collaborative mapping.</p>
<p>14. References & suggested sources</p>	<p>Barrett, L. F., & Russell, J. A. (2015). Understanding Empathy and Its Role in Education. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1373293.pdf</p> <p>Costantini, G. (2019). Empathy in education: the successful teacher. In <i>Empathy: Emotional, ethical and epistemological narratives</i> (pp. 73-81). Brill https://brill.com/display/book/edcoll/9789004398122/BP000006.xml</p> <p>Jalongo, M. R. (2014). Humane education and the development of empathy in early childhood: Definitions, rationale, and outcomes. <i>Teaching compassion: Humane education in early childhood</i>, 3-21. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-007-6922-9_1</p> <p>McGowan, K., Christenson, L. A., & Muccio, L. (2021). Collaborative professional learning: An exploration of empathy in early childhood teacher education. <i>Journal of Research in Childhood Education</i>, 35(1), 111-121. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02568543.2020.1801537</p>
<p>15. Appendix following</p>	<p>See Tools used in the activity below</p>

APPENDIX

Appendix 1. Video Clips list - For Facilitators Use

This categorized format supports thoughtful clip selection based on emotional accessibility, depth, and cultural/contextual complexity.

Emotion Type	Clip & Scene	Emotional Focus
Universal / Easily Relatable Emotions	Spider-Man (2002) - Peter discovers Uncle Ben has died	Guilt, grief, and responsibility
	Jurassic Park (1993) - T-Rex attack scene	Fear, panic, and survival instincts
	Frozen (Disney) - Elsa sings "Let It Go"	Fear of judgment, emotional release, self-acceptance
Transformational / Empowering Moments	Wonder Woman (2017) - Diana crosses No Man's Land	Courage, compassion, and moral responsibility
	Batman Begins (2005) - Bruce Wayne confronts his fear in the cave	Vulnerability, fear, personal growth
	Game of Thrones (S1E10) - Daenerys walks into the fire with the dragon eggs	Grief, rebirth, transformation into leadership
	X-Men (2000) - Rogue and Logan discuss her mutation	Isolation, longing for connection, fear of self mutation
	Friends (S5E14) - Phoebe tries to seduce Chandler ("The One Where Everybody Finds Out")	Humor, awkwardness, discomfort, miscommunication
Subtle / Culturally Dependent Emotions	Tangled (Disney) - Rapunzel sees the floating lanterns for the first time	Wonder, joy, inner conflict, emotional tension
	Joker (2019) - Arthur's breakdown in the subway	Alienation, internal chaos, emotional repression, societal pressure
	Pixar Short: <i>Piper</i> (2016)	Bravery, curiosity, growth, parent-child dynamic
	Pixar Short: <i>La Luna</i> (2011)	Generational roles, wonder, identity
Non-Verbal / No Dialogue Clips (for Warm-Ups or Emotional Nuance Practice)	Pixar Short: <i>The Present</i> (2014) by Jacob Frey	Surprise, acceptance, empathy, transformation
	Inside Out (Disney) - Silent memory scene (e.g., Sadness comforting Bing Bong)	Nostalgia, compassion, emotional support

Appendix 2: Emotional Mapping Prompt Sheet

Instructions:

1. After watching the video clip, take a moment to reflect on the character’s experience.
2. Use the prompts below to guide your reflection and document your observations.

Prompt	Participant's Notes
What is the character feeling?	Observe and note emotional cues, body language, etc.
What is the character hearing?	Identify words or sounds affecting the character’s mood.
What is the character saying?	Record phrases or expressions the character uses.
What is the character doing?	Describe actions that reflect the character’s emotions.

Appendix 4: Reflection Questions for Dyad and Group Discussion

1. Pair up with another participant and exchange your visual maps.
 2. Use the questions below to guide your discussion.
-
- What similarities or differences did you notice in your observations compared to your partner's?

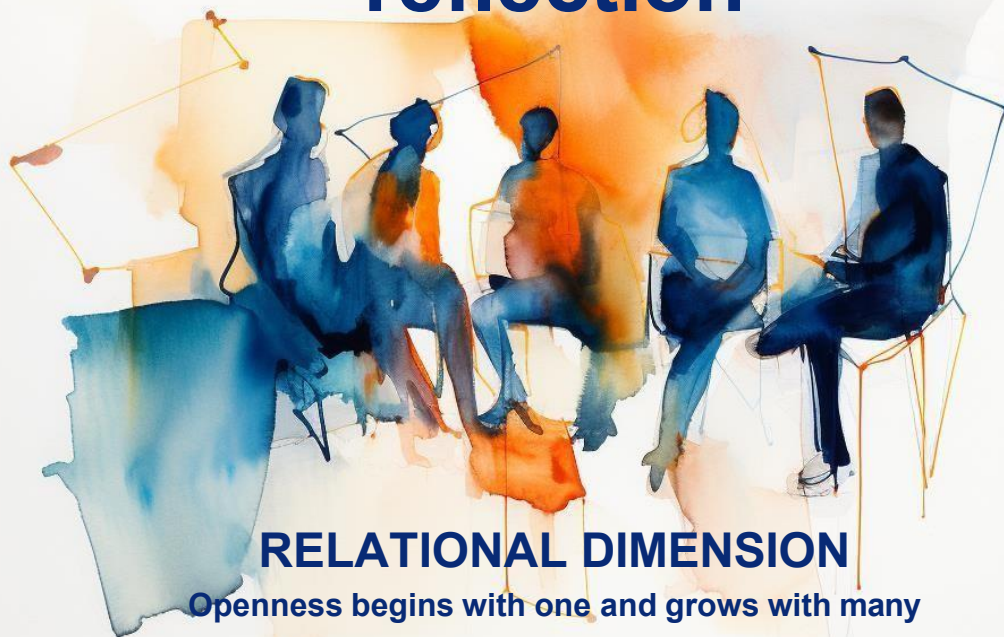
 - How did the character's emotions influence their actions?

 - Did you feel empathy toward the character? Why?

 - What new insights did your partner's observations provide about the character's experience?



ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



RELATIONAL DIMENSION

Openness begins with one and grows with many

LeaFaP

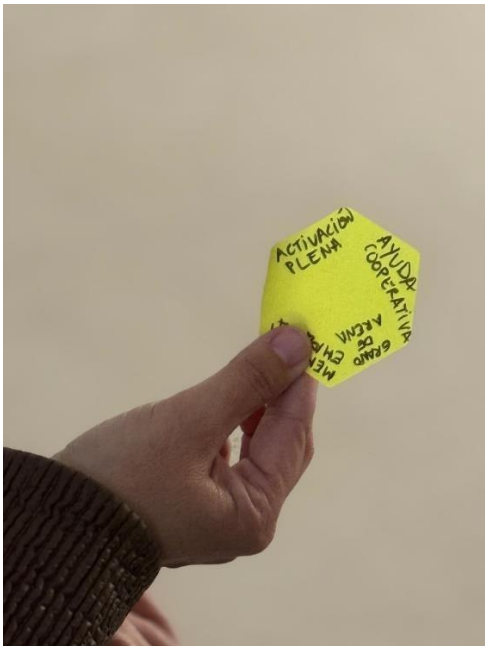
Leading and Facilitating Professional Learning Communities
in Schools towards an Inquiry-based and Reflective Practice
KA220-SCH - Cooperation partnerships in school education

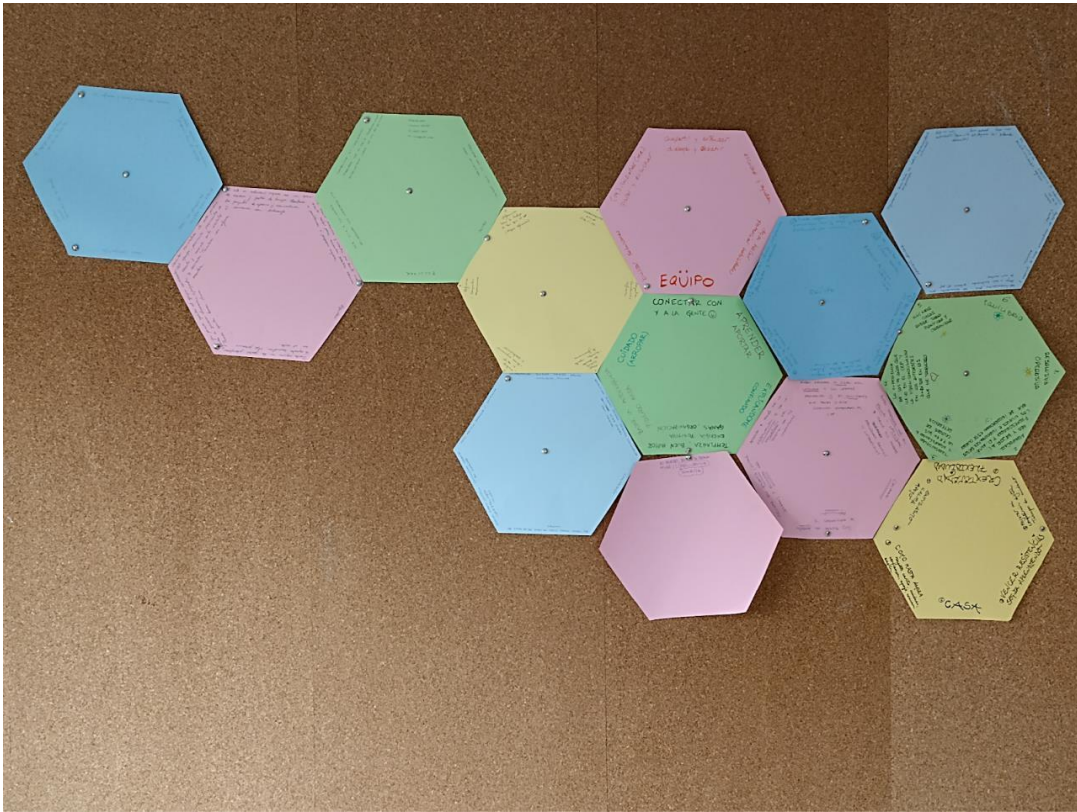
Relational Dimension

1. Focus of the activity	Team Building
2. Duration of practice	Appr. 30-50 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	It is not suitable for groups working together for the first time. It is necessary that there is some knowledge on the part of the members.
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Cohesion of the team ✓ Create an environment of collaboration and trust among team members. ✓ Know the strengths and needs of the team members. ✓ Detect those who can help me and who I can help. ✓ Promote proactivity in the team. ✓ Create group belonging. ✓ Agree on a word or motto that defines the team.
5. Description of the activity	<p>The facilitator (F) welcomes the group and explains the importance of team building</p> <p>Phase 1</p> <p>The facilitator should encourage the group to recognize that the outcome of collaborative work is greater than the sum of individual efforts. The idea is to create a collaborative ecosystem similar to that used by bees to create honey (hence the metaphor), in which each team member contributes his or her talents and skills to achieve a common group goal.</p> <p>Phase 2</p> <p>Six questions are posed to be answered individually in the hexagon provided.</p> <p>The facilitator will state them one by one, and will leave a brief space after each one of them so that the participants can write their answer in their hexagon (Appendix 1).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.- What am I really good at? 2. What challenge do I set myself for this course/term/period? 3.-How can the team help me to achieve it? 4.-What can I contribute to the team? 5.- How am I going to commit myself to the team? 6.- A word that defines our team?/Our motto as a team. <p>Phase 3</p> <p>If the group consists of less than six members, the answers to each of the first five questions are shared.</p> <p>The idea is not to present them in a linear fashion, but rather for the facilitator to interrelate them. For example, if a member expresses a strength, the facilitator could ask who has similar strengths or if someone has a need and this strength could help him/her.</p> <p>If the number is more than 6, two groups can be formed. Afterwards, they will share the outstanding ideas of each one of them.</p> <p>Phase 4</p> <p>After the presentation of the first five questions, the motto/word that each member considers should define the team is presented.</p> <p>All members define a phrase that will serve as an anchor or talisman for the team.</p> <p>Phase 5</p> <p>A panel is built with the group motto and the different hexagons are glued together so that it can be placed in a visible space and can be consulted by all members.</p> <p>The creation of a figure formed by the entirety of the hexagons can be carried out either on a table or directly on the wall. There is no predetermined correct form; rather, it is up to the participants to decide at that moment. It is possible to join the hexagons without any apparent reason, aligning the edges of different hexagons that represent what one member can offer to the group and what another needs to receive, or whatever they decided. (Example in Appendix 2)</p>
6. PLC dimensions addressed	✓ Relational dimension: team building, fostering positive and trusting relationship
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Relational dimension</p> <p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Trust- and empathy-building strategies and their importance in group settings <p>Skills</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate interpersonal skills, including empathy and respect, through verbal and non-verbal cues. • Respond to emotional cues communicated by group members appropriately. • Conduct activities that foster respect and openness among the PLC members. • Create and maintain a safe space within the community. • Create and maintain a supportive and inclusive environment where all PLC members feel safe to express themselves, challenge ideas, assumptions, etc. and be challenged by other members. <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to fostering positive and trusting relationships • Commitment to maintaining a positive, collaborative environment even during conflicts
8. Activity format	Individual ,in groups (if necessary), whole team
9. Materials & tools	Material 1: Hexagonal posits or hexagonal cardboards, Cardboard to make the final document with the motto and the honeycomb formed by all the hexagons of the group.
10. Room & preparation	<p>The room should allow the creation of groups if necessary.</p> <p>Having hexagonal posits or hexagonal shapes ready.</p> <p>A piece of cardboard to make the final panel</p>
11. Dimensions of inclusion	<p>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 and the whole group and thus encourages spaces for dialogue. F assists in summing up the common ground achieved through reflection and discussions and issues for further exploration among the group.</p> <p>Especially for online activities: Accessibility and Inclusivity means ensuring that the online room is accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities, by providing features like closed captioning, screen reader compatibility, and easy navigation</p>
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	We will not discuss whether we agree or disagree on the strengths or needs that each member expresses. We will maintain a respectful attitude in which we will not make value judgments. We will start from the coincidences to build the identity of the group.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	In case meetings are virtual, a document could be generated in an online collaborative tool that all members could access with the hexagonal shapes already created so that each member could write in his or her own. Finally, the team's motto would be written in this document.
14. References & suggested sources	Text
15. Appendix following	<p>Appendix 1 - Hexagon template</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Example of final result</p>

APPENDIX 1



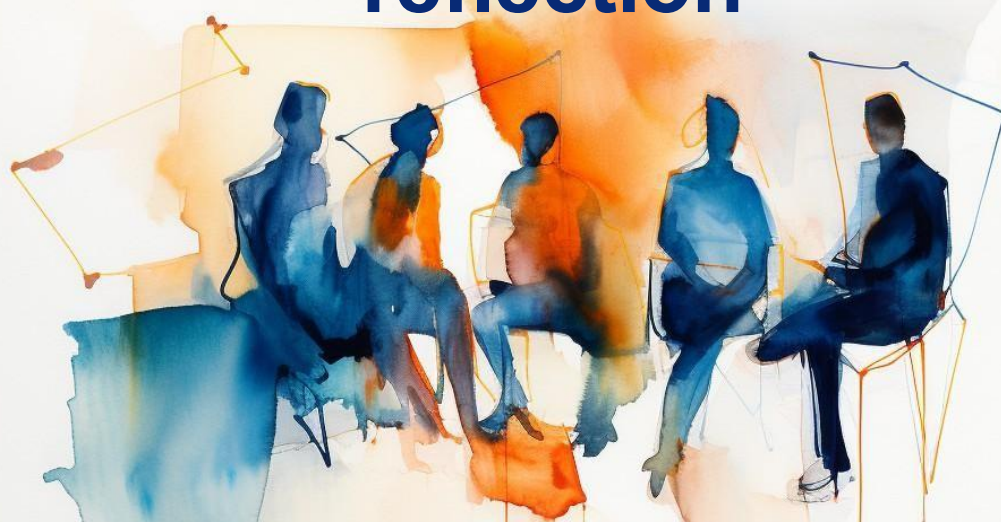


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Erasmus+ Project LeaFaP

ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



RELATIONAL DIMENSION

Meta in motion: From talking to thinking about talking

LeaFaP

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

Relational Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Reflecting team - a common source and starting point for meta-communication
2. Duration of practice	Ongoing activity during a PLC-meeting
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Participants who have some previous experience and are familiar with being part of a PLC.
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Utilize a reflecting team as a resource for learning, ✓ Promote personal reflection among educators ✓ Empower educators to take responsibility for their own professional development. ✓ Enable educators to clarify their thoughts, draw meaningful conclusions, and gain deeper insights into their practice.
5. Description of the activity	<p>At least two (preferably more) of the PLC group members withdraw from the group and take on an observer role. Their task is only to observe and listen to <u>the communication</u> in the group.</p> <p>Step 1: The PLC group starts their meeting as usual, and regardless of the structure of the meeting, or content being focused on, it is important that the group has begun their discussions and reflections before the meeting leader decides to call a timeout. The reflecting team observes and listens actively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they just sharing experiences and stories about what they do, or are they challenging each other by asking why questions - why did you do it that way, why that choice? • Is evidence being requested, or is the conversation characterized by what they believe and assume about consequences and results? • Are open or leading/loading questions being asked? • Does the conversation jump from one topic to another, or is someone trying to summarize, check their understanding, and capture different perspectives that are not being addressed? • Are they quick to give advice without spending time to delve deeper first? • Are there any good questions being asked that help the discussions go deeper? • Are there areas where they see that more depth could have been explored? <p>Step 2: Reflection (10 minutes) The leader of the PLC group calls a timeout where the PLC group stops and only listens. During the timeout(s), the members of the reflecting team have a conversation about what they noticed in the PLC-group. The other group members are not allowed to talk/comment when this is happening. They should be completely silent and only listen to what the reflective team has noticed (max 10 minutes each time).</p> <p>The reflective team shares their thoughts on the communication and how they talk about the issue/topic. The members of the reflective team address each other - not the group. The leader ensures the discussion stays focused on the conversation and avoids turning it into a debate about good or bad. The question is not whether the communication is good or bad, but to get feedback on whether they are at a superficial level or if the group is able to go deeper. Whether they can challenge each other in a way that promotes reflection and learning. This is very important!</p> <p>Once they've reflected back what they've observed, the participants are allowed to think to themselves for a few minutes, and then the conversation moves on.</p> <p>Step 3: Feedback (maximum 5 minutes) At the end of the meeting, everyone participates in a meta-communication. Each PLC participant can briefly comment on what they heard during the reflection round. They can also share any ideas and thoughts they had on how to contribute more to the exploration of practice and the challenging of each other in the meetings. Those who have been the reflective team in the meeting also participate in this conversation.</p> <p>Step 2 and 3 can be repeated once or twice during the meeting.</p> <p>Being a reflective team takes turns between the participants in the PLC.</p>

6. PLC dimensions addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Relational dimension ✓ Communication dimension ✓ Collaborative dimension ✓ Learning- and knowledge-building dimension ✓ Reflection and inquiry dimension ✓ Organizational Dimension
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Knowledge the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective communication principles, including active listening and clear, respectful expression of ideas. - Moderation and facilitation techniques. - Techniques to encourage equitable participation. - Techniques for fostering reflective practice. - Techniques for facilitating productive dialogue. <p>Skills the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote active listening - Paraphrase and summarise key points and decisions from discussions concisely and clearly - Commitment to inclusivity and fairness. - Make use of the group’s previous knowledge and experiences to foster reflection and critical thinking. - Deliver feedback that is specific, actionable, and supportive. - Structure the outcomes of inquiry results and reflective discussion. <p>Attitudes the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being receptive to different perspectives and ideas during discussions. - Openness to feedback and continuous improvement of communication practices. - Commitment to inclusivity and fairness. - Valuing critical analysis as a tool for improvement. - Encouragement of exploration of assumptions and of critical thinking.
8. Activity format	Group activity
9. Materials & tools	<p>Tool 1: Inquiry Question Table.</p> <p>Tool 2: Reflective Questions Table on Behaviors.</p> <p>Tool 3: Reflecting on Our Practices: More, Less, Start, Stop, and Keep doing.</p>
10. Room & preparation	No special requirements for rooms.
11. Dimensions of inclusion	If desired, a reflective team can also observe how the group manages to take care of everyone - but the main focus is on communication and how it affects the participants' reflection and engagement.
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	If desired, a reflective team can also observe how the group manages to maintain democratic values and practices - but the main focus is on communication and how it affects the participants' reflection and engagement.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	This activity can just as easily be carried out in a digital meeting.
14. References & suggested sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Andersen, T. (1987). The reflecting team. <i>Fam Proc</i> 26: 415 - 428. - Earl and Timperley, 2008 - Killen, K. (2012). <i>Profesjonell utvikling og faglig veiledning</i>. Oslo: Gyldendal - Le Fevre, D. M., Robinson, V. M., & Sinnema, C. E. (2015). Genuine inquiry: Widely espoused yet rarely enacted. <i>Educational Management Administration & Leadership</i>, 43(6), 883-899. - MacPhail, A., Tannehill, D. & Ataman, R. (2021). The role of the critical friend in supporting and enhancing professional learning and development. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19415257.2021.1879235?scroll=top&needAccess=true#abstract - Ulleberg, I., & Jensen, P. (2017). Asking Questions in Supervision. <i>Supervision of Family Therapy and Systemic Practice</i>, 45-67.
15. Appendix following	Appendix 1: What is a Reflective Team?



ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



COMMUNICATION DIMENSION

The power of questions: Navigating misunderstandings and
sparking insight

LeaFaP

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

Communication Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Using language to avoid misunderstandings and enhance reflection (I): Clarifying and probing questions
2. Duration of practice	120-135 minutes (depending on the number of participants in the PLC)
3. Target group	All types of PLCs
4. Prior experience of the PLC	Early stages of the PLC establishment
5. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To model and encourage participants to use clarifying and probing questions ✓ To guide PLC participants in reflective inquiry related to their practices and/or observations ✓ To engage the group in meta-conversations to reflect on and improve communication processes within the PLC. ✓ To foster commitment to self-directed learning and continuous improvement. ✓ To foster openness to feedback and continuous improvement of communication practices.
6. Description of the activity	<p>Introduction:</p> <p>The facilitator (F) welcomes the group and announces the focus of the meeting: encouraging PLC members to communicate effectively and reflect deeply on the professional practices they have implemented or observed with the help of questions. F explains the difference between superficial exchanges, which are brief and surface-level conversations about teaching practices, and respectful, reflective dialogue, which aims to address unclear or incomplete information and promote deeper thinking.</p> <p>Phase 1:</p> <p>F invites a participant to share updates on her/his progress with their Action Plan (AP) or to comment on a teaching/professional concern. Once a participant has finished discussing their progress, F encourages the rest of the group to ask questions that clarify the message, foster understanding aligned with the speaker's intended meaning, and prompt the speaker to think deeper into the issues raised. Once questions have been made, s/he uses some of these questions to encourage clarification and deeper reflection (see Tool 1 with examples of questions).</p> <p>Phase 2:</p> <p>F provides a brief explanation about the role of clarifying and probing questions in effective communication and reflective dialogue within a PLC (see Tool 1 for a brief characterisation of both types of questions). After that, F provides a copy of Tool 1 to the PLC participants, allow them time to read it and clarifies any doubts. This tool can also be shared with PLC members before the activity, allowing them sufficient time to read it at their leisure and identify any queries.</p> <p>Next, F invites the rest of participants, one by one, to share updates on their progress with their AP or to comment on a teaching or professional concern. After each participant provides their update, F encourages the group to ask clarifying and probing questions, ensuring that all PLC members are involved in the discussion and that no one monopolises the dialogue. F may also continue to model these types of questioning, particularly after participants have asked their questions.</p> <p>Phase 3:</p> <p>F provides the PLC participants with the questions from Tool 2, 'Reflection on PLC development' for group discussion aimed at advancing effective and fair communication and fostering reflection within the PLC.</p>

	<p>Phase 4: F provides the PLC participants with the questions from Tool 3, 'Reflection on own learning', for them to reflect on either at the end of the PLC meeting—if time permits—or at their own pace in a learning journal or similar document.</p> <p>Closure: F sums up the meeting and the PLC participants arrange time and place for next meeting.</p>
7. PLC dimensions addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Communication dimension ✓ Inquiry and reflection
8. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Techniques for facilitating productive dialogue. o Effective communication principles, including active listening and assertive communication o Techniques for fostering reflective practice. <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ask probing questions to stimulate critical thinking. o Use questioning techniques to promote deeper thinking. o Guide members in reflective inquiry related to their practices. <p>Attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Encouragement of exploration of assumptions and of critical thinking. <p>Further Learning Outcomes</p> <p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection techniques and tools for professional development. <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct self-assessments and reflections to evaluate facilitation and leadership effectiveness. • Facilitate discussions to ensure all members can contribute and feel heard • Engage the group in meta-conversations to reflect on and improve communication processes <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to fostering a reflective culture. • Commitment to self-directed learning and continuous improvement. • Openness to feedback and continuous improvement of communication practices.
9. Activity format	Whole group and individual
10. Materials & tools	<p>Tool 1. Clarifying and probing questions: Characterisation, categories, and examples</p> <p>Tool 2. Reflection on PLC development</p> <p>Tool 3. Reflection on own learning (for PLC participants)</p>
11. Room & preparation	<p>Room will be arranged in Π shape.</p> <p>Copy Tools 1, 2, and 3.</p>
12. Dimensions of inclusion	<p>Diversity within a PLC: F should ensure that all PLC members present progress on their AP and that each member asks clarifying and probing questions to their peers. F facilitates by summarising the common ground achieved through reflection and discussions and identifies issues for further exploration within the group.</p>



ACTIVITIES to equip PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection

13. Promotion of democratic values and practices	All participants are encouraged to contribute their ideas, opinions, and perspectives. F ensures that these contributions are actively listened to and considered, and that each participant has the opportunity to speak without any single voice dominating, fostering balanced participation. Collective decision-making is promoted by focusing on questioning techniques that can be prioritised for future meetings.
14. Appropriation for digital PLCs	Tools can be shared in online communication platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meet. An online whiteboard such as Padlet or Mural can be used for gathering impressions in conjunction with Tool 3: Reflection on PLC development.
15. References & suggested sources	Erasmus+ TePinTeach project (IO4 - Modules for developing communication strategies for effective PLC): https://www.tepinteach.eu/introduction-to-the-idea/
16. Appendix following	Yes

Tool 1: Clarifying and probing questions: Characterisation, categories, and examples

Clarifying questions

Clarifying questions are inquiries aimed at ensuring understanding and eliminating confusion. They seek to clarify ambiguous or incomplete information by asking for further explanation or details. These questions are often used in conversations to ensure that the listener accurately interprets what is being communicated, preventing misunderstandings and facilitating more effective dialogue.

Category 1. Request for confirmation of understanding

These questions are aimed at verifying whether the listener has correctly understood the speaker's message. They help ensure that there is no miscommunication and that both parties have a shared understanding.

- *You said that... Did I get it right? / Did I understand it correctly?*
- *Did I understand your point accurately when you said...*
- *... Did I summarise what you said correctly?*
- *Am I understanding you correctly when you say...?*
- *If I understand correctly, you're suggesting that...?*
- *Just to be clear, are you saying that...?*

Category 2. Request for elaboration

These questions seek further explanation or details to enhance understanding of a particular point or statement made by the speaker.

- *When you mentioned..., could you elaborate on that?*
- *Can you give us more information/ details about...?*
- *Can you expand on [you've just said]?*

Category 3. Request for clarification or rephrasing

These questions focus on understanding ideas, terms or concepts used by the speaker to ensure that their meaning is clear.

- *What do you mean when you say that...?*
- *Could you explain what you meant by...?*
- *Can you clarify what you meant when you refer to...?*
- *What exactly do you mean by [specific term/concept/idea]?*
- *Can you rephrase that, so I make sure I got it right?*

Category 4. Request for examples

These questions ask for concrete examples or illustrations to clarify ideas, making them more comprehensible.

- *Could you give me an example of what you mean by...?*
- *Can you provide an example to illustrate your point?*

Probing questions

Probing questions are open-ended inquiries designed to encourage deeper reflection, exploration, and clarification of ideas, decisions, or experiences. These questions are used to elicit more detailed information, challenge assumptions, and promote critical thinking. In professional settings, probing questions help individuals to reflect on their practices, analyse underlying issues, and generate insights that can lead to improved performance and more informed decision-making.

Category 1. Request for introspection

These questions focus on reflecting on personal experiences, motivations, and emotions related to practice. It encourages self-awareness and deeper introspection.

- *What is/was your intention with this?*
- *What made you feel particularly proud or.... (reference to different emotions)?*
- *Can you explain why you feel/felt that way?*
- *What do you think influenced your view of how the lesson went?*
- *What do you think your statement/your didactic approach/etc. implies about your understanding of student learning/wellbeing?*
- *What assumptions are/were you making here (about student learning, classroom management, professional learning...)?*

Category 2. Request for reflection on problem-solving and decision-making

These questions prompt the interlocutor to analyse challenges, identify root causes, and explore solutions. It encourages PLC members to reflect on the decisions they have made, examine their problem-solving approaches, and consider potential changes.

- *What do you think is at the root of this problem/situation?*
- *What would you need to change or do differently to achieve what you need/want?*
- *How did you come to this conclusion/solution to this concern of yours? Did you collect any evidence?*
- *How did you come to that decision?*
- *How can you gain more certainty about the sources of the problem and the actions you are suggesting?*
- *What do you think would happen if you tried a different approach?*
- *Can you walk me/us through your thought process?*
- *Next time, what can you change to improve the outcome?*

Category 3. Request for reflection on impact and outcomes

Questions in this category enquiry about the results and effects of actions taken. They encourage teachers to think about the outcomes of their decisions -both expected and unexpected- and to anticipate the impact of future actions.

- *What sort of impact do you think this has/can/will have?*
- *If the outcome didn't go as planned, what went wrong, what factors did you not anticipate?*
- *What do you predict will happen?*
- *What is your biggest concern regarding the effect of this course of action?*

Category 4. Request for reflection on learning and improvement

Questions in this category focus on continuous professional growth and development. The questions encourage reflection on successes and failures, the application of lessons learned, and exploring ways to enhance professional practice.

- *What have you learned from this experience?*
- *What do you think you need to do differently to improve?*
- *Why do you think it worked well (or didn't)?*
- *What do you think was the key to your success?*
- *What factors contributed to its success?*
- *What theories (e.g., of learning, student development, group dynamics) can you use to explain and evaluate your success (or lack thereof)?*
- *Why do you think it didn't work?*
- *What factors do you think contributed to it not working as expected?*
- *What do you plan to do next?*

Category 5. Request for comparative analysis

This category includes questions that compare current situations or experiences with past ones. They help PLC members to contextualise their practice by drawing on previous knowledge and identifying patterns that can inform future actions.

- *What does this remind you of? (previous teaching experiences, as a student teacher, or as an observer, or as a student?)*
- *How does this situation compare to previous experiences you've had?*
- *In what ways did the students' responses in this class differ from previous lessons? Why do you think that happened?*
- *How does this teaching strategy compare to other methods you've tried for similar topics?*
- *What differences did you notice between the outcomes of this lesson and similar lessons you've delivered in the past? Why do you think these differences occurred?*
- *What similarities and differences do you see between the challenges you faced in this lesson and those in earlier lessons? Why do you think these challenges persisted or changed?*
- *In what ways did the students' understanding of the material differ from what you observed in previous classes? Why do you think this difference occurred?*
- *How does the classroom dynamic in this lesson compare to other times you've taught similar material? What happened differently this time, or what did you do differently?*

Note: The categories described above are not mutually exclusive. Professional practice and reflection in the field of education often involve overlapping elements, so certain questions may touch on multiple aspects of experience, decision-making, impact, learning, and comparative analysis.



Tool 2: Reflection on PLC development

Collective reflection (the PLC group discusses their answers to the following questions):

- How effectively did the PLC use clarifying and probing questions?
- In what ways did the questions help in understanding and analysing the progress in the AP shared and/or other members' concern?
- What can we improve our questioning techniques for future meeting?
- How can we improve our questioning techniques for future meeting?

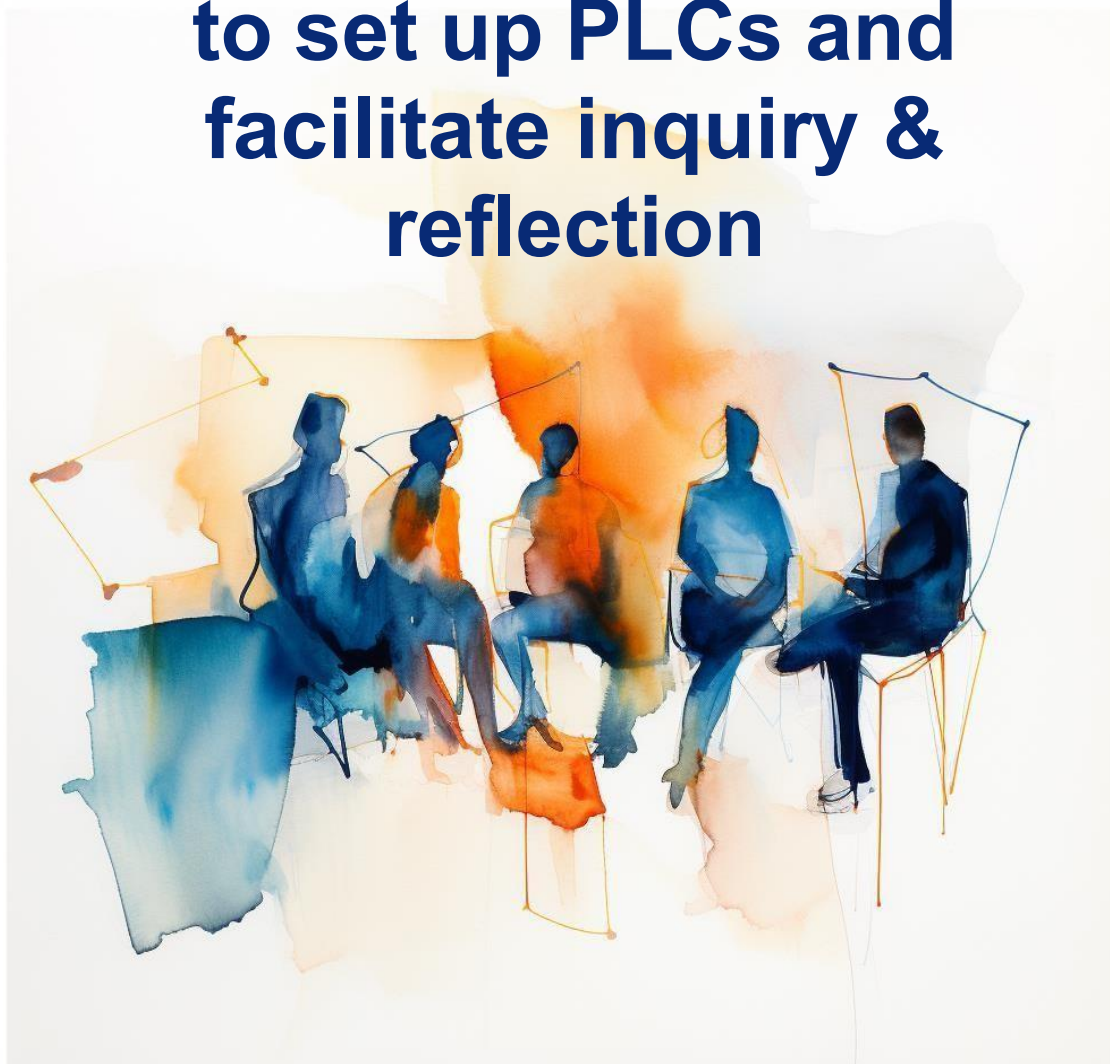


Tool 3: Reflection on own learning (for PLC participants) Individual reflection: Take time to thoughtfully answer the following reflective questions:

- What did you learn from the clarifying and probing questions used today?
- What assisted you in this learning and how?



ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



COLLABORATIVE DIMENSION

Knowledge map: Making our strengths visible

LeaFaP

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

Collaborative Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Knowledge Map - Making PLC Skills and Resources Visible
2. Duration of practice	75 Minuten
3. Prior experience of the PLC	For PLCs that are in the early to middle phase of collaboration and still have little structured insight into the members' competencies
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This activity aims to identify and visualize the skills and resources of all PLC members in order to promote synergies, identify knowledge gaps and target future collaboration. ✓ The knowledge map is designed to be a constantly expandable and customizable tool, providing an up-to-date overview of the knowledge and skill levels of all members. ✓ This creates a basis on which the collective use and further development of skills can be planned.
5. Description of the activity (350-500 words)	<p>Introduction (10 minutes)</p> <p>The facilitator (F) welcomes the participants and introduces the aim of the knowledge map. F explains that this method aims to make the existing resources, experiences and individual skills of all members visible. This is intended to create connections between the skills and identify synergies in a targeted manner. F emphasizes that the knowledge map should be understood as a dynamic overview that is continuously expanded and adapted to reflect development and change within the PLC. This ensures that the knowledge map always represents the current level of knowledge and skills of the group and serves as a resource for future decisions.</p> <p><u>Flexibility of the method</u></p> <p>F explains that both digital and analog methods can be used, depending on the preferences of the participants. Digital tools such as Miro, Padlet or Microsoft Whiteboard allow for easy documentation and later editing, while analog methods, such as the use of flipcharts and post-its, provide a visual and haptic representation that can be particularly beneficial in face-to-face sessions. Both methods have their advantages, and participants can decide together which method they prefer.</p> <p>Phase 1: Collecting individual contributions (15 minutes)</p> <p>Each participant receives the handout “Personal knowledge profile” (Tool 1 - see appendix for example), on which they note their specialist areas, resources, strengths and previous experience. This can include specific skills (e.g. expertise in digital education or subject didactics) as well as overarching skills (e.g. communication skills, team leadership or empathy in dealing with students). In addition, participants could also indicate other important resources, such as material resources, contacts and networks, time resources, experience in special projects, etc.</p> <p><u>Option for digital tools and analog methods</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Digital version:</u> Participants enter their contributions directly onto a digital whiteboard, which remains accessible and editable for everyone. This enables a clear presentation and flexible adjustments even after the session. • <u>Analog version:</u> Participants write down their contributions on cards or post-its, which are then attached to a large poster or flipchart. This visual presentation creates a tangible overview in the room and encourages direct interaction. <p>Phase 2: Creating the knowledge map (30 minutes)</p> <p>After the individual contributions have been collected, the participants present their entries in plenary. F collects the contributions and organizes them on a large map (either on a flipchart or a digital whiteboard) in categories such as expertise, practical skills and resources. The contributions are sorted, and similar or complementary contributions are linked to make synergies visible. F encourages participants to ask questions about their colleagues' contributions and point out possible connections they see. This creates a comprehensive, visualized representation of the PLC's collective strengths and capabilities.</p> <p><u>Option for the use of digital tools and analog methods</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Digital version:</u> The digital whiteboard can be edited by all participants at the same time, creating an interactive and ongoing collaboration. The digital map remains saved after the session and can be added to at any time. • <u>Analog version:</u> The knowledge map is created on a flipchart or large poster. Participants can visually connect their contributions with lines or color-code them to show relationships. This map also remains available as a resource in the room and can be used for future sessions. <p>Phase 3: Discussion and reflection (20 minutes)</p> <p>In the final phase, the participants discuss the knowledge map together. F moderates the discussion and asks reflection questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “What skills and resources have we pooled in our group?” • “Which areas could we develop further in the future?” • “How can we use the identified strengths specifically in PLC work?” • “What potential collaborations or initiatives could emerge from these potentials?” <p>This reflection should help the participants to develop an awareness of the combined strengths and potential within the group. They also discuss how the knowledge map can be used as a planning tool for future meetings and as a basis for new projects. F documents the main results of the discussion and ensures that all participants can contribute their perspectives.</p>
<p>6. PLC dimensions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Collaborative dimension (main dimension) ✓ Relational dimension (additional dimension) ✓ Digital dimension (additional dimension)
<p>7. Learning outcomes for the participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Knowledge: Participants receive an overview of the knowledge and resources available in the group and can thus close any gaps and deficits in a targeted manner. ✓ Knowledge: Participants understand how knowledge and resources can be optimally utilized within the PLC and how members' individual strengths complement each other. ✓ Skills: Participants learn how to visualize competencies and work with knowledge maps to specifically identify and utilize potential. ✓ Attitudes: Participants develop an appreciation for the diverse knowledge and experience within the team and recognize that every contribution is valuable and contributes to the group's collective growth. They also cultivate a mindset of collaboration, focused on mutual benefit and continuous development.
<p>8. Activity format</p>	<p>Individual reflection, plenary discussion, group discussion</p>

9. Materias/Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tool 1: “Individual knowledge profile” handout for each participant • Flipchart, digital whiteboard or large poster for the knowledge map • Markers and colored pens • For digital version: notebooks, projector, smartboard, Google Formular, Mentimeter or Slido for the knowledge map
10. Room & Preparation	<p>The room should be designed in such a way that all participants can easily see the knowledge map and have easy access to the flipchart or whiteboard. Alternatively, digital whiteboards can be set up and made accessible to all participants. These digital tools offer the advantage that the map can be edited and viewed by everyone during and after the session. With the analog version, sufficient materials such as markers, post-its and posters should be available so that all participants can contribute their ideas visually.</p>
11. Dimension of Inclusion	<p>The knowledge map promotes inclusion, as the contributions of all members are considered and valued. F ensures that all perspectives and skills are presented equally and that everyone is given the opportunity to actively contribute. It ensures that even quiet voices are heard and that the entire process is based on mutual appreciation. This strengthens the members' sense of belonging and creates a culture in which diversity is perceived as an enrichment.</p>
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<p>This activity promotes democratic values and practices through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal participation: All members have the opportunity to contribute and present their skills and resources on an equal footing. • Transparency and trust: By making all resources and skills visible, a transparent image of the group is created that promotes trust and appreciation. • Collective decision-making: The group discussion and the joint creation of the knowledge map support collective decision-making in which all voices are heard.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	<p>The knowledge map can be easily adapted for digital PLCs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital whiteboards: tools such as Miro, Padlet or Microsoft Whiteboard allow for interactive and flexible creation of the knowledge map. These tools offer the possibility to share and collaborate on contributions in real time, which is particularly valuable for virtual teams. • Synchronous and asynchronous working: The knowledge map can be added to both synchronously during a meeting and asynchronously afterwards, allowing collaboration to continue outside of meetings.
14. References & suggested sources	<p>Sary, C., Maroscher, M., & Sary, E. (2012). <i>Wissensmanagement in der Praxis: Methoden, Werkzeuge, Beispiele</i> (S. 115 ff.). Carl Hanser Verlag.</p> <p>Eppler, M., & Burkhard, R. (2007). Visual representations in knowledge management: Framework and cases. <i>Journal of Knowledge Management</i>, 11(4), 112-122. https://doi.org/10.1108/13673270710762756</p>
15. Appendix	below

APPENDIX

Tool 1: Handout “Individual knowledge profile” (example)

Note: Please take your time to fill out this sheet in detail. The information collected here will be used in the next step to create a shared knowledge map that makes all the skills and resources of the group visible.

Individual knowledge profile
Area of expertise: <i>(Describe your areas of expertise, e.g. mathematics didactics, digital education, etc.)</i>
Other abilities: <i>(Note any other skills you can bring to the PLC, e.g. project management, moderation experience, etc.)</i>
Soft Skills: <i>(Describe your interpersonal skills, such as team leadership, empathy, conflict resolution, etc.)</i>
Material resources: <i>(List of teaching materials, digital tools, special software or access points that can be used for the work of the PLC)</i>
Contacts and networks: <i>(Note important professional contacts, collaborations or access to external experts that could be useful to the group)</i>
Time resources: <i>(Describe your availability for additional projects, possible times for support or mentoring)</i>
Experience with special projects: <i>(Indicate your experience in pilot projects, international collaborations or other special programs)</i>
Additional relevant resources: <i>(Note here anything else that may contribute to the current PLC topic, depending on the specific objectives of the PLC)</i>

Example of a knowledge map

Topic: Digital education and innovative teaching methods

Category	Member contributions	Connections & synergies
Areas of expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematics didactics (Sarah) Digital education (Michael) Language support (Emily) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection between language development and mathematics (integration of digital tools for language development in mathematical tasks). Michael could offer workshops for all members on digital tools in education.
Other abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management (John) Moderation experience (Emily) Video creation for teaching (Michael) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael and John could work together to develop a video project to introduce digital learning methods, which John would lead. Emily could take over the facilitation of PLC meetings to increase efficiency.
Soft Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team leadership (John) Empathy (Sarah) Conflict resolution (Emily) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John takes on the role of group leader for project coordination. Sarah can act as a mentor for younger colleagues to strengthen the well-being of the team.
Materiall ressources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to learning platforms (Michael) Digital whiteboards (Emily) Specialist literature on subject didactics (Sarah) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael can organize training on the use of the learning platforms for all members. Emily will ensure that all PLC members have access to the digital whiteboards.
Contacts and networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact with the university (Michael) Cooperation with the city library (Sarah) Access to IT experts (John) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael could arrange workshops on digital education through his university contact. Sarah organizes an event in the city library to present innovative teaching projects.
Time resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 hours per week for mentoring (Sarah) 1 hour per week for technical training (John) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sarah provides weekly mentoring sessions for new members. John runs regular technical training sessions to bring all members up to speed.
Experience with special projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of a pilot project on blended learning (Michael) Participation in international school partnership (Emily) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emily and Michael could contribute their experience to the planning of a new international project using blended learning.
Additional relevant resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest in gamification in the classroom (Sarah) Experience with virtual reality (John) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John and Sarah could develop a concept together to integrate VR technology and gamification into the classroom.



ACTIVITIES

to set up PLCs and facilitate
inquiry & reflection



LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE BUILDING DIMENSION

Reflect, choose, evolve: Evaluating actions through inquiry

LeaFaP

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

Learning and Knowledge Building Dimension

1. Focus of the activity	Action Learning (plan)
2. Duration of practice	Ongoing activity during a PLC-meeting, but the activity may be tested during two meetings.
3. Target group	School leaders
4. Prior experience of the PLC	Can be used by any PLC
5. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase awareness of how to act to achieve a desired goal, - Enhance reflection on how and why we assume that the actions will lead us towards the goal - Enable us to understand (after an action) why we succeeded or failed to achieve the objective
6. Description of the activity	<p>Action Learning can be described as a learning process where you systematically observe and reflect on your own experiences. Action learning aims to mobilize your existing knowledge and combine it with new knowledge in new development processes. In action learning, knowledge sharing and knowledge development are central. Primarily, these knowledge processes take place in teams or workgroups, but through various measures, the knowledge can be shared with all employees.</p> <p>Action Learning for exploring and Improving Practice</p> <p><i>Before meeting 1</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify Areas for Improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflect on your current practice. - Reflect upon and ask yourself why you do things the way you do. - Note specific aspects you want to change. 2. Create an Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Describe the specific areas you want to improve. - Formulate good questions that can help you achieve the desired changes. <p><i>In meeting 1</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss with Colleagues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share your reflections and plans with your principal colleagues. - Get feedback and new perspectives on your plan. - Refine the action-plan <p><i>Before meeting 2</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Observe and Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carry out actions and observations where the practice is to be changed. - Gather information through observation. <p><i>In meeting 2</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reflect and Analyze <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use the collected information and share it with your peers in order to reflect on, analyze and get feedback on your practice. 2. Evaluate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluate the effect of the changes and adjust if and as needed. Refine your action learning plan.

7. PLC dimensions addressed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning- and knowledge-building dimension 2. Reflection and inquiry dimension
8. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Understand how inquiry and reflection facilitate professional learning in a PLC</p> <p>Knowledge the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concept of reflective thinking and practice. - Give examples to understand how inquiry can inform practice. <p>Skills the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduce inquiry as a necessary process for professional learning. <p>Attitudes the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to evidence-based practices. <p>Encourage individual and group reflection and critical analysis of professional practices to identify learning goals</p> <p>Knowledge the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Techniques for fostering reflective practice. <p>Skills the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make use of the group's previous knowledge and experiences to foster reflection and critical thinking. <p>Attitudes the participants are going to develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commitment to fostering a reflective culture. - Valuing critical analysis as a tool for improvement.
9. Activity format	Group activity
10. Materials & tools	The members in the group have filled in the template - action learning plan
11. Room & preparation	No special requirements for rooms.
12. Dimensions of inclusion	This activity is in itself inclusive, but it requires the meeting leader to ensure that everyone says something and receives feedback on their action plan or completed action.
13. Promotion of democratic values and practices	This activity requires the meeting leader to ensure that everyone says something and receives feedback on their action plan or completed action.
14. Appropriation for digital PLCs	This activity can just as easily be carried out in a digital meeting.
15. References & suggested sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wiliam, D. (2007). Changing classroom practice. <i>Educational leadership</i>, 65(4), 36. - Revans, R. W. (1982). What is action learning?. <i>Journal of management development</i>, 1(3), 64-75. - Van Der Voort, G., & Wood, L. (2014). Assisting school management teams to construct their school improvement plans: an action learning approach. <i>South African Journal of Education</i>, 34(3), 1-7.
16. Appendix following	Template A and B

Appendix:

Template A - Framework for action learning plan, with explanations of the different phases

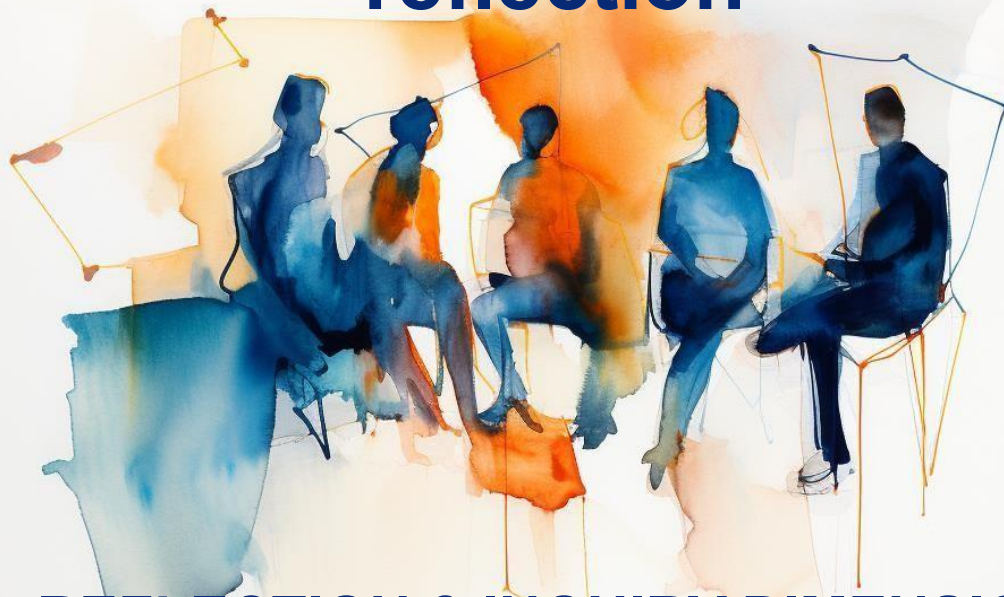
	Phases	Explanations
1	Overall Objective	<p>Plan your action based on a challenge you experience or something you want to develop as a leader. This could be significant tasks (like leading the development of a school-wide reading plan) or specific, everyday challenges (such as delegating tasks or providing feedback).</p> <p><i>Define your main goal. For example, developing your leadership team into a Professional Learning Community (PLC), Initiate or follow up on development work, or improving your ability to lead conversations with teachers about their reading instruction.</i></p>
2	Justification and Planning	<p>Elaborate on why you selected this topic/area. Your justification can be based on specific experiences you've had as a leader in guiding teachers' learning.</p> <p>Create a plan detailing what you need to learn more about and how you intend to carry out your action. This plan can include a timeline for a longer period or a plan for something to be tested from one meeting to the next.</p> <p><i>Explain why you chose this topic. Plan what you need to learn and how you will implement your actions. This can include starting each leadership meeting with specific topics, using models from your principal network, and practicing follow-up questions.</i></p>
3	Implementation	Implement the planned actions in practice.
4	Observation	Observe the actions. Gather information about the action through your own recounting, notes, questions to middle managers, documents, audio recordings, etc.
5	Reflection	<p>Reflection on action. Share experiences with the principal colleagues.</p> <p><i>How did I practice showing respect, seeking valid information, involving others in decision-making, and creating internal commitment. What was the consequences. What can explain this? How do I know?</i></p>
6	Planning New Actions	Based on what you have developed and explored, what will you further develop in your role as a leader?

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ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



REFLECTION & INQUIRY 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: 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: 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: F asks the dyads to report their findings in whole group and reason / discuss the commonalities and differences found. 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. 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? 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). F also assists in summing up the results of the inquiry on their own beliefs.</p> <p>Phase 4: 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: 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: center;">Reflection and inquiry</p> <p>Knowledge: o Techniques for facilitating productive dialogue of members</p>

	<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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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	<p>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.</p>
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<p>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.</p>
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
<p>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?</p>		
<p>CAUSES Did you refer to similar causes or factors that influence the situation? What are the reasons for possible similarities or differences?</p>		
<p>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?</p>		
<p>AIMS-GOALS Did you find similarities or differences in the goals for improving the situation? What are these and why?</p>		



ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



REFLECTION & INQUIRY DIMENSION

Beyond the question: Verifying the effectiveness of clarifying
and probing questions

LeaFaP

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

Inquiry & Reflection Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Using language to avoid misunderstandings and enhance reflection (II): Verifying the effectiveness of clarifying and probing questions to avoid misunderstandings and enhance reflection
2. Duration of practice	120-135 minutos (dependiendo del número de participantes en la CPA)
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Early stages of the PLC establishment
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To model and encourage participants to use clarifying and probing questions ✓ To guide participants to assess the use of clarifying and probing questions ✓ To guide PLC participants in reflective inquiry related to their practices and/or observations ✓ To engage the group in meta-conversations to reflect on and improve communication processes within the PLC. ✓ To foster commitment to self-directed learning and continuous improvement. ✓ To foster openness to feedback and continuous improvement of communication practices.
5. Description of the activity	<p>Note: This activity should be implemented after the previous one titled “The power of questions: Navigating misunderstandings and sparking insight”.</p> <p>Introduction: F announces the focus of the meeting: encouraging PLC members to use clarifying and probing questions and validating the effectiveness of these questions to avoid misunderstandings and enhance reflection. (In a previous session, the PLC participants will have learned about and practiced using clarifying and probing questions. In this activity, they will continue practicing these questions and will additionally focus on their effects on dialogue within the PLC).</p> <p>Phase 1: F reminds the group to use clarifying and probing questions, provides a copy of Tool 1 if participants do not have it from the previous session, allows 2-3 minutes for them to review it, and encourages its use during the PLC meeting. Then, F invites participants to share updates on their progress with their Action Plan (AP) or to comment on a teaching or professional concern. Once the first participant has finished their intervention, F invites the PLC participants to use Tool 1 to ask him/her clarifying and reflective questions, ensuring that all PLC members are involved in the discussion and that no one monopolises the dialogue. F may also continue to model these types of questioning, particularly after participants have asked their questions.</p> <p>Phase 2: F provides the PLC participants Tool 2 and asks them to identify, by marking with a tick (✓), the types of questions being used in the conversation and their effects. Then, F invites the rest of participants, one by one, to share updates on their progress with their AP or to comment on a teaching or professional concern. After each participant provides their update, F encourages the group to ask clarifying and probing questions, using Tool 2 to assess their impact. PLC members need to be given sufficient time to complete Tool 2 by recalling the questions asked and reflecting on their effect. F can also record the questions asked during each intervention and, once it concludes, read them aloud to remind participants of the questions posed to facilitate the PLC members’ completion of Tool 2.</p> <p>Phase 3: F provides the PLC participants with the questions from Tool 3, 'Reflection on PLC development' for group discussion aimed at advancing effective and fair communication and fostering reflection within the PLC.</p>

	<p>Phase 4: F provides the PLC participants with the questions from Tool 3, ‘Reflection on own learning’, for them to reflect on either at the end of the PLC meeting—if time permits—or at their own pace in a learning journal or similar document.</p> <p>Closure: F sums up the meeting and the PLC participants arrange time and place for next meeting.</p>
6. PLC dimensions addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inquiry and reflection ✓ Communication dimension
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Techniques for fostering reflective practice. o Techniques for facilitating productive dialogue. o Self-reflection techniques and tools for professional development. <p>Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Ask probing questions to stimulate critical thinking. o Use questioning techniques to promote deeper thinking. o Guide members in reflective inquiry related to their practices. <p>Attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Encouragement of exploration of assumptions and of critical thinking. <p>Further Learning Outcomes</p> <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct self-assessments and reflections to evaluate facilitation and leadership effectiveness. • Facilitate discussions to ensure all members can contribute and feel heard • Engage the group in meta-conversations to reflect on and improve communication processes <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to fostering a reflective culture. • Commitment to self-directed learning and continuous improvement. • Openness to feedback and continuous improvement of communication practices.
8. Activity format	Whole group and individual
9. Materials & tools	<p>Tool 1. Examples of clarifying and probing questions</p> <p>Tool 2. Interaction observation template</p> <p>Tool 3. Reflection on PLC development</p> <p>Tool 4. Reflection on own learning (for PLC participants)</p>
10. Room & preparation	<p>Room will be arranged in Π shape.</p> <p>Copy Tools 1, 2, 3 and 4.</p>
11. Dimensions of inclusion	Diversity within a PLC: F should ensure that all PLC members present progress on their AP and that each member asks clarifying and probing questions to their peers. F facilitates by summarising the common ground achieved through reflection and discussions and identifies issues for further exploration within the group.
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	All participants are encouraged to contribute their ideas, opinions, and perspectives. F ensures that these contributions are actively listened to and considered, and that each participant has the opportunity to speak without any single voice dominating, fostering balanced participation. Collective decision-making is promoted by focusing on questioning techniques that can be prioritised for future meetings.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	Tools can be shared in online communication platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or Google Meet.

	An online whiteboard such as Padlet or Mural can be used for gathering impressions in conjunction with Tool 3: Reflection on PLC development.
14. References & suggested sources	Text Erasmus+ TePinTeach project (IO4 - Modules for developing communication strategies for effective PLC): https://www.tepinteach.eu/introduction-to-the-idea/
15. Appendix following	Yes

Tool 1: Clarifying and probing questions: Characterisation, categories, and examples

Clarifying questions

Clarifying questions are inquiries aimed at ensuring understanding and eliminating confusion. They seek to clarify ambiguous or incomplete information by asking for further explanation or details. These questions are often used in conversations to ensure that the listener accurately interprets what is being communicated, preventing misunderstandings and facilitating more effective dialogue.

Category 1. Request for confirmation of understanding

These questions are aimed at verifying whether the listener has correctly understood the speaker's message. They help ensure that there is no miscommunication and that both parties have a shared understanding.

- *You said that... Did I get it right? / Did I understand it correctly?*
- *Did I understand your point accurately when you said...*
- *... Did I summarise what you said correctly?*
- *Am I understanding you correctly when you say...?*
- *If I understand correctly, you're suggesting that...?*
- *Just to be clear, are you saying that...?*

Category 2. Request for elaboration

These questions seek further explanation or details to enhance understanding of a particular point or statement made by the speaker.

- *When you mentioned..., could you elaborate on that?*
- *Can you give us more information/ details about...?*
- *Can you expand on [you've just said]?*

Category 3. Request for clarification or rephrasing

These questions focus on understanding ideas, terms or concepts used by the speaker to ensure that their meaning is clear.

- *What do you mean when you say that...?*
- *Could you explain what you meant by...?*
- *Can you clarify what you meant when you refer to...?*
- *What exactly do you mean by [specific term/concept/idea]?*
- *Can you rephrase that, so I make sure I got it right?*

Category 4. Request for examples

These questions ask for concrete examples or illustrations to clarify ideas, making them more comprehensible.

- *Could you give me an example of what you mean by...?*
- *Can you provide an example to illustrate your point?*

Probing questions

Probing questions are open-ended inquiries designed to encourage deeper reflection, exploration, and clarification of ideas, decisions, or experiences. These questions are used to elicit more detailed information, challenge assumptions, and promote critical thinking. In professional settings, probing questions help individuals to reflect on their practices, analyse underlying issues, and generate insights that can lead to improved performance and more informed decision-making.

Category 1. Request for introspection

These questions focus on reflecting on personal experiences, motivations, and emotions related to practice. It encourages self-awareness and deeper introspection.

- *What is/was your intention with this?*
- *What made you feel particularly proud or.... (reference to different emotions)?*
- *Can you explain why you feel/felt that way?*
- *What do you think influenced your view of how the lesson went?*
- *What do you think your statement/your didactic approach/ etc. implies about your understanding of student learning/wellbeing?*
- *What assumptions are/were you making here (about student learning, classroom management, professional learning...)?*

Category 2. Request for reflection on problem-solving and decision-making

These questions prompt the interlocutor to analyse challenges, identify root causes, and explore solutions. It encourages PLC members to reflect on the decisions they have made, examine their problem-solving approaches, and consider potential changes.

- *What do you think is at the root of this problem/situation?*
- *What would you need to change or do differently to achieve what you need/want?*
- *How did you come to this conclusion/solution to this concern of yours? Did you collect any evidence?*
- *How did you come to that decision?*
- *How can you gain more certainty about the sources of the problem and the actions you are suggesting?*
- *What do you think would happen if you tried a different approach?*
- *Can you walk me/us through your thought process?*
- *Next time, what can you change to improve the outcome?*

Category 3. Request for reflection on impact and outcomes

Questions in this category enquiry about the results and effects of actions taken. They encourage teachers to think about the outcomes of their decisions -both expected and unexpected- and to anticipate the impact of future actions.

- *What sort of impact do you think this has/can/will have?*
- *If the outcome didn't go as planned, what went wrong, what factors did you not anticipate?*
- *What do you predict will happen?*
- *What is your biggest concern regarding the effect of this course of action?*

Category 4. Request for reflection on learning and improvement

Questions in this category focus on continuous professional growth and development. The questions encourage reflection on successes and failures, the application of lessons learned, and exploring ways to enhance professional practice.

- *What have you learned from this experience?*
- *What do you think you need to do differently to improve?*
- *Why do you think it worked well (or didn't)?*
- *What do you think was the key to your success?*
- *What factors contributed to its success?*
- *What theories (e.g., of learning, student development, group dynamics) can you use to explain and evaluate your success (or lack thereof)?*
- *Why do you think it didn't work?*
- *What factors do you think contributed to it not working as expected?*
- *What do you plan to do next?*

Category 5. Request for comparative analysis

This category includes questions that compare current situations or experiences with past ones. They help PLC members to contextualise their practice by drawing on previous knowledge and identifying patterns that can inform future actions.

- *What does this remind you of? (previous teaching experiences, as a student teacher, or as an observer, or as a student?)*
- *How does this situation compare to previous experiences you've had?*
- *In what ways did the students' responses in this class differ from previous lessons? Why do you think that happened?*
- *How does this teaching strategy compare to other methods you've tried for similar topics?*
- *What differences did you notice between the outcomes of this lesson and similar lessons you've delivered in the past? Why do you think these differences occurred?*
- *What similarities and differences do you see between the challenges you faced in this lesson and those in earlier lessons? Why do you think these challenges persisted or changed?*
- *In what ways did the students' understanding of the material differ from what you observed in previous classes? Why do you think this difference occurred?*
- *How does the classroom dynamic in this lesson compare to other times you've taught similar material? What happened differently this time, or what did you do differently?*

Note: The categories described above are not mutually exclusive. Professional practice and reflection in the field of education often involve overlapping elements, so certain questions may touch on multiple aspects of experience, decision-making, impact, learning, and comparative analysis.

Tool 2: Interaction observation template

Question type	Question category (Request for...)	Effect (on listener, overall communication, understanding of the discussed issue, opportunity for reflection, etc.)
Clarifying	gCat. 1. Confirmation of understanding Examples: <i>You said that... Did I get it right? / Did I understand it correctly?</i> <i>Just to be clear, are you saying that...?</i>	
	g Cat. 2. Elaboration Examples: <i>What do you mean when you say that...?</i> <i>When you mentioned..., could you elaborate on that?</i>	
	g Cat. 3. Clarification or rephrasing Examples: <i>Can you clarify what you meant when you refer to...?</i> <i>What exactly do you mean by [specific term/concept/idea]?</i>	
	g Cat. 4. Examples Examples: <i>Could you give me an example of what you mean by...?</i> <i>Can you provide an example to illustrate your point?</i>	
	g Other	
Probing	gCat. 1. Experience and introspection Examples: <i>What is/was your intention with this?</i> <i>What do you think influenced your view of how the lesson went?</i>	
	g Cat. 2. Reflection on problem-solving and decision-making Examples: <i>What do you think is at the root of this problem/situation?</i> <i>How did you come to that decision?</i>	
	g Cat. 3. Reflection on impact and outcomes Examples: <i>What sort of impact do you think this has/can/will have?</i> <i>If the outcome didn't go as planned, what went wrong?</i>	
	g Cat. 4. Reflection on learning and improvement Examples: <i>What do you think you need to do differently to improve?</i> <i>What have you learned from this experience?</i>	

	<p>g Cat. 5. Comparative analysis Examples: <i>What does this remind you of?</i> <i>How does this situation compare to previous experiences you've had?</i></p>	
	<p>g Other</p>	

Tool 3: Reflection on PLC development

Collective reflection (the PLC group discusses their answers to the following question):

- Which types of questions were most effective in fostering clearer communication and eliminating misunderstandings?
- Which types of questions were most effective in fostering deeper discussion?
- What can we improve our questioning techniques for future meeting?
- How can we improve our questioning techniques for future meeting?

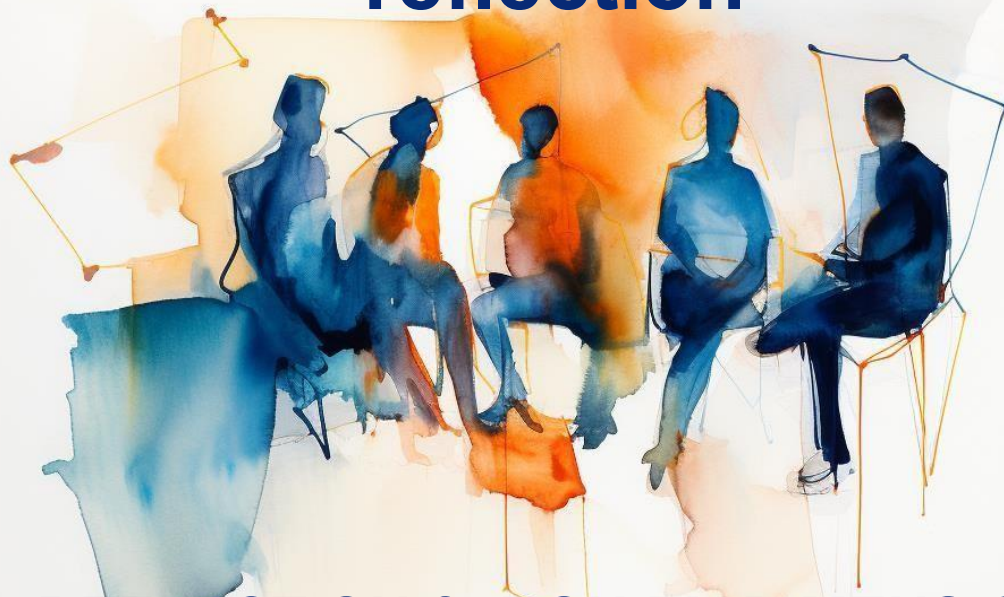
Tool 4: Reflection on own learning (for PLC participants)

Individual reflection: Take time to thoughtfully answer the following reflective questions.

- What did you learn from the clarifying and probing questions used today?
- What assisted you in this learning and how?



ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



REFLECTION & INQUIRY DIMENSION

Explore. Reflect. Decide: Building an informed PLC culture

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	Introducing inquiry and reflection as prerequisites for making informed decisions in a PLC
2. Duration of practice	appr. 120 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Middle step of a PLC (PLC members have identified the issue of concern and have shared and reflected upon their related beliefs and practices)
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To assist the group’s reflection on their previous practices of detecting a school issue to be solved or improved ✓ To assist the group to realise the need for an inquiry of the educational context in order to understand the reasons of this issue, the related goals and content of their actions ✓ To introduce different research tools and their possible use in assisting the inquiry process
5. Description of the activity	<p>Introduction: The facilitator (F) welcomes the group and makes a summary of the results of their last meeting. F explains the aims of this meeting as shown above.</p> <p>Phase 1: F introduces tool 1 and asks PLC participants to fill it in individually writing short phrases and keywords, rather than a long text. Tool 1 assists participants to describe their prior practices when confronted with an issue to be solved/improved, the ways they documented its understanding and decided about the goals and content of their actions as well as the ways they evaluated the effectiveness of their chosen actions. If the group is small (5-8 members) F can ask the members to report their answers to the group and use a board or a slide in the computer to note down responses. If the group is bigger (10+ members), F asks members to exchange their answers in Tool 1 with another member and then discuss the similarities or differences they found in their answers. In both cases, F enhances reflection using prompting questions such as: Did you found something similar or different in the way other members have answered these questions? What is that? What did these differences make you think or possibly reconsider? Do we observe any dominant practices in how we make decisions?</p> <p>Phase 2: F presents an example of the need and ways of inquiry to make informed decisions within the PLC. The emphasis is given to how the results of inquiry can lead to different decisions than the ones taken without the use of inquiry. Tool 2 provides such an indicative example and asks members to form small groups and to use the information gained from inquiry to think about the goals and action plan based on the inquiry results with the use of guiding reflective questions. The groups can also compare the results of decision making with and without the use of inquiry. At the end of this phase PLC members discuss their reflections based on Tool 2 with the following indicative prompting questions “What is the new understandings gained from this example that could shape differently the decisions taken by you?” “What would you change in your previous practices based on this new understanding?”.</p> <p>Phase 3: F introduces Tool 3 to provide spaces for reflection and a critical approach to their prior practices in terms of the types and process of documentation included in them or not. F asks each member to share their reflections with the group and focuses on their ability to question their prior practices and detect different ways they could have used.</p> <p>Phase 4: F asks members to sum up any confirmation or change of their prior beliefs and practices as part of the documentation process of the PLC progress and share them with the group. Indicative questions are: Did you reaffirm or validate some of your previous beliefs and practices in making decisions about the choice, goals, action and evaluation of the issue that concerns you? What is this? What assisted you in this reaffirmation of your beliefs? Are you convinced about the need for using inquiry in making decisions after our meeting? Why yes/no?</p> <p>Closure: F sums up the knowledge and understanding gained from this activity (how inquiry can lead to a revised understanding of the issue that concerns the group and subsequently reorient the decisions about the goals, content and evaluation of the action plan.) PLC members decide about the time and place for next meeting that is convenient for all.</p>
6. PLC dimensions addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inquiry and reflection

7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Theoretical framework of inquiry based learning o Types of valid data (open-ended questionnaire, peer observation, etc.) <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Introduce inquiry as a necessary process for professional learning. o Give examples to understand how inquiry can inform practice. <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commitment to evidence-based practices
8. Activity format	Individual, dyad/small group, whole group activities
9. Materials & tools	<p>Tool 1. Exploring prior practices of decision making</p> <p>Tool 2. The need and role of inquiry in making informed decisions: an example</p> <p>Tool 3. Reflection tool about previous practices</p> <p>*The phrasing of questions in Tools 1 and 3 vary for the group of head teachers and the group of in-service teacher trainers or out of school facilitators.</p>
10. Room & preparation	<p>Room will be arranged in Π shape that will allow both whole team and groups to work successfully.</p> <p>Copy Tools 1, 2 and 3 for all participants. Have a board or a computer connected with a projector to note down the responses of the group. Tool 2 may also be chosen to be presented as a ppt and to copy only the questions provided in it for the participants to note down their responses.</p>
11. Dimensions of inclusion	<p>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 issues for further exploration among the group.</p>
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<p>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.</p>
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

Appendix: Tools used in the activity:

Since tools can be used with two different groups (head teachers and in-service teacher educators) questions in Tools 1 and 2 have been slightly changed to fit into the role of each group participants.

TOOLS FOR SCHOOL HEAD TEACHERS

Tool 1. Exploring prior practices of decision making

Based on the ways you have worked in your school to solve / improve a situation that concerned you, please answer to the following questions. If some of the questions are not applicable in your case you can leave them unanswered (blank).

Issue of concern:.....

Why did you choose this issue of concern?	
What information did you have to identify what needed to be improved/changed? (How did you decide about the goals of your actions?)	
Who did you receive information from?	
What were the ways to receive this information?	
On what basis/how did you choose your action plan to resolve / improve this issue?	
How did you become aware of the results of the action plan you implemented?	
Did you collect specific information to evaluate the results of your action plan?	
Did you collect specific information to evaluate the results of your action plan or did someone else provide this information?	
What was this information and how did you collect it?	

Tool 2. The need and role of inquiry in making informed decisions: an example

This tool describes two different ways of handling the same issue of concern at the school level (1st and 2nd case), this being “the relationships among teachers and pupils”. Please compare the two different ways of actions and answer the questions taking into account the results of inquiry conducted in the 2nd case.

1st CASE - DECISION MAKING WITHOUT INQUIRY

1. WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Teachers have observed that pupils often fail to pay attention in class, frequently make noise or misbehave in the classroom and this leads them to make remarks to them and feel distressed during teaching. The result of this is to have conflicts with their pupils which affect a negative classroom climate and poor relationships among teachers and pupils.

2. WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

- To clarify the rules that need to be respected by all to avoid remarks and conflicts with the pupils.
- To enforce stricter measures or consequences of children’s misbehaviour when this persists.
- To make parents aware of this problem and ask for their assistance.

3. WHAT IS THE ACTION PLAN?

- ✓ Teachers prepare a sheet of paper with the rules and present it to children and ask them to sign it showing that they have become aware and agree to follow them. This sheet of paper is also put on the classroom wall for pupils to remember.
- ✓ Teachers also inform the children about the measures/consequences decided after the second remark pupils receive from the teacher.
- ✓ Teachers prepare a letter to inform parents about the issue and the measures taken and ask for their assistance to confront it by speaking to their children about their behaviour in class.

4. HOW IS THE ACTION PLAN EVALUATED?

- ✓ The staff discusses whether children’s attention in class and behaviour have been improved based on what happens in their classrooms.

2ND CASE - DECISION MAKING BASED ON INQUIRY OF THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

1. WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Teachers have observed that pupils often fail to pay attention in class and make noise in the classroom and this leads them to make frequent remarks to them and feel distressed during teaching. Teachers decide to inquire further into this situation. Thus, teachers decide:

- A) to explain to their pupils that their opinions and suggestions regarding this matter are crucial to make a common decision/plan about how to deal with this situation.
Thus they decide to ask their pupils during a lesson to give anonymised responses either hand written or in an electronic form, first about what they like and do not like during teaching or more generally in their school and what they would like to change and, secondly, about how they feel when noise or disruption of the teaching is made and what they suggest to deal with this issue (open-ended questionnaire).
- B) To help each other understand the reasons for this situation by exchanging visits to each other’s classrooms and observing when and why children lose their attention or make noise (peer observation). Teachers meet after peer observations and exchange information and reflections.

Indicative results of inquiry A) show that pupils feel that their teachers are only concerned with teaching the content of textbooks, rather than considering their emotions or addressing any learning difficulties they may have in order to provide support. Some children also feel that it is impossible to follow the lesson because of its difficulty and mention that they have received criticism from their teachers when they asked them to explain the lesson once more.

Indicative results of inquiry B) show that teachers tend to not wait enough time for children to respond to their questions and thus children lose interest when the children that respond quicker are always chosen by the teacher to answer them. Teachers give positive feedback only to correct responses. After the first ten minutes teachers fail to ensure children’s participation. Group work is very rarely chosen as a mode for children’s participation.

- 1. WHAT IS THE NEW INFORMATION? Based on the results of inquiry, what are the dimensions / information that teachers failed to take into account in the first example as reasons that affect their relationship with the pupils?

- 2. HOW WILL THE GOALS BE SHAPED BY THIS INFORMATION?

What are the goals you would choose based on the results of inquiry?
How different are they from the ones in the 1st case and why?

3. WHAT WILL THE ACTION PLAN BE?

How is the action plan expected to be different from the one in 1st case?

4. HOW IS THE ACTION PLAN EVALUATED?

Teachers decide to repeat the open-ended questionnaires to children and peer observation and compare the results with the initial results. Teachers also share the results with their pupils and ask them to verify their understandings or/and further make proposals for the improvement of their school experience.

Tool 3. Reflection tool about previous practices

Based on the way you answered the questions in Tool 1 and after we processed Tool 2 how confident are you in your previous decision-making practices? What reasons support your level of confidence? Do you think you needed to do something differently?

How confident are you about your previous decisions and why?	PREVIOUS PRACTICES RELATED TO:	I needed to do/could have done something differently...
	Your decision to work on the specific issue of concern	
	The goals you set to change or improve the situation	
	The appropriateness of your action plan to change or improve the situation	
	The ways you evaluated the results of your action plan	

TOOLS FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINERS OR OUT OF SCHOOL FACILITATORS

Tool 1. Exploring school decision-making practices

Based on your communication and collaboration with the schools you support, list the dominant practices of schools using the second column in the table below. In the third column you can write if there is anything that concerns you about these practices or something that you are trying to recommend differently in schools.

	DOMINANT PRACTICES	REFLECTION OR PROPOSAL OF ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY
1. How are the issues of concern to schools chosen? What is the procedure followed?		
2. Are there specific goals for schools to change or improve issues? If so, how and by whom are the objectives of the school's actions to address the issues decided?		
3. On what basis/in what ways is the action plan to resolve/improve this issue organised? How and by whom are the actions to be taken decided?		
4. Are the results of the action plan being implemented evaluated? If so, by whom and in what ways?		

Tool 2. The need and role of inquiry in making informed decisions: an example

This tool describes two different ways of handling the same issue of concern at the school level (1st and 2nd case), this being “the relationships among teachers and pupils”. Please compare the two different ways of actions and answer the questions taking into account the results of inquiry conducted in the 2nd case.

1st CASE - DECISION MAKING WITHOUT INQUIRY

1. WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Teachers have observed that pupils often fail to pay attention in class, frequently make noise or misbehave in the classroom and this leads them to make remarks to them and feel distressed during teaching. The result of this is to have conflicts with their pupils which affect a negative classroom climate and poor relationships among teachers and pupils.

2. WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

- To clarify the rules that need to be respected by all to avoid remarks and conflicts with the pupils.
- To enforce stricter measures or consequences of children’s misbehaviour when this persists.
- To make parents aware of this problem and ask for their assistance.

3. WHAT IS THE ACTION PLAN?

- ✓ Teachers prepare a sheet of paper with the rules and present it to children and ask them to sign it showing that they have become aware and agree to follow them. This sheet of paper is also put on the classroom wall for pupils to remember.
- ✓ Teachers also inform the children about the measures/consequences decided after the second remark pupils receive from the teacher.
- ✓ Teachers prepare a letter to inform parents about the issue and the measures taken and ask for their assistance to confront it by speaking to their children about their behaviour in class.

4. HOW IS THE ACTION PLAN EVALUATED?

- ✓ The staff discusses whether children’s attention in class and behaviour have been improved based on what happens in their classrooms.

2ND CASE - DECISION MAKING BASED ON INQUIRY OF THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT

1. WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Teachers have observed that pupils often fail to pay attention in class and make noise in the classroom and this leads them to make frequent remarks to them and feel distressed during teaching. Teachers decide to inquire further into this situation. Thus, teachers decide:

- C) to explain to their pupils that their opinions and suggestions regarding this matter are crucial to make a common decision/plan about how to deal with this situation.
Thus they decide to ask their pupils during a lesson to give anonymised responses either hand written or in an electronic form, first about what they like and do not like during teaching or more generally in their school and what they would like to change and, secondly, about how they feel when noise or disruption of the teaching is made and what they suggest to deal with this issue (open-ended questionnaire).
- D) To help each other understand the reasons for this situation by exchanging visits to each other’s classrooms and observing when and why children lose their attention or make noise (peer observation). Teachers meet after peer observations and exchange information and reflections.

Indicative results of inquiry A) show that pupils feel that their teachers are only concerned with teaching the content of textbooks, rather than considering their emotions or addressing any learning difficulties they may have in order to provide support. Some children also feel that it is impossible to follow the lesson because of its difficulty and mention that they have received criticism from their teachers when they asked them to explain the lesson once more.

Indicative results of inquiry B) show that teachers tend to not wait enough time for children to respond to their questions and thus children lose interest when the children that respond quicker are always chosen by the teacher to answer them. Teachers give positive feedback only to correct responses. After the first ten minutes teachers fail to ensure children’s participation. Group work is very rarely chosen as a mode for children’s participation.

- 2. WHAT IS THE NEW INFORMATION? Based on the results of inquiry, what are the dimensions / information that teachers failed to take into account in the first example as reasons that affect their relationship with the pupils?

3. HOW WILL THE GOALS BE SHAPED BY THIS INFORMATION?

What are the goals you would choose based on the results of inquiry?
How different are they from the ones in the 1st case and why?

4. WHAT WILL THE ACTION PLAN BE?

How is the action plan expected to be different from the one in 1st case?

5. HOW IS THE ACTION PLAN EVALUATED?

Teachers decide to repeat the open-ended questionnaires to children and peer observation and compare the results with the initial results. Teachers also share the results with their pupils and ask them to verify their understandings or/and further make proposals for the improvement of their school experience.

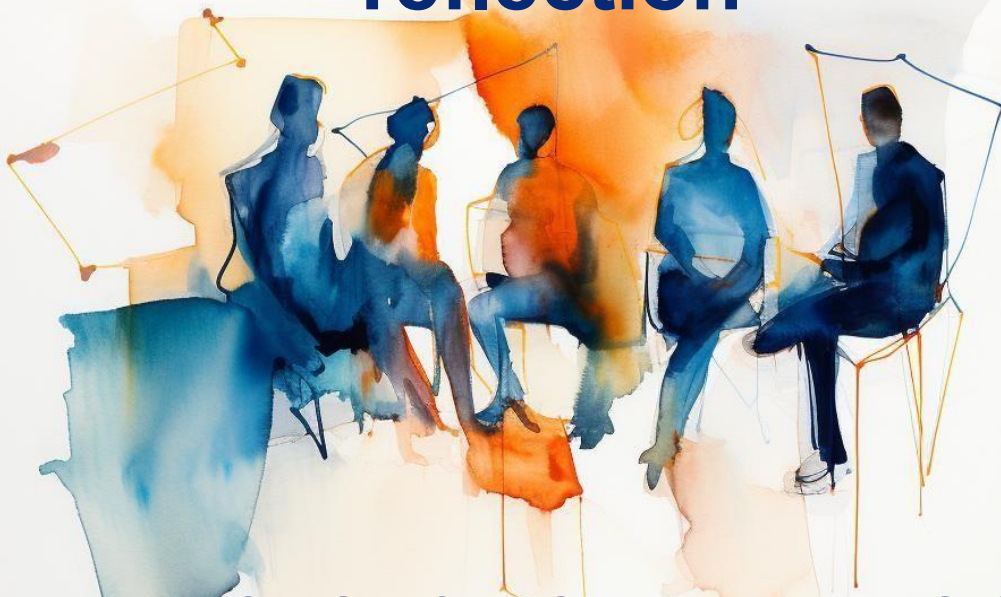
Tool 3. Reflection tool on past practices

Based on how you answered the questions in tool 1, how confident are you now about past decision-making practices in the schools you support or your own view of these practices? What reasons support or not your sense of confidence? Do you think something needs to be done differently with regard to schools and/or your own practices to support them in the decision-making process?

How confident are you about past decision-making practices by schools and why?	PRACTICES	What needs to be done differently in relation to existing school practices?	What needs to be done differently in relation to your way of supporting schools in relation to these practices?
	1. Selection of issues by schools		
	2. Choosing goals and identifying what needs to be changed by schools		
	3. Appropriateness of schools' action plan to change or improve the situation		
	4. How to evaluate the results of your action plan		



ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



REFLECTION & INQUIRY DIMENSION

From actions to insights: Unpacking classroom incidents

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	Refinement of the inquiry process and analysis
2. Duration of practice	120 minutes (approx..)
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Middle step of a PLC. This activity is especially designed to be used after the PLC participants had the opportunity to take actions and apply within their practice some of the main ideas discussed in a previous meeting
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Participants will refine their inquiry processes, developing a more structured approach to understanding and improving their professional actions. ✓ Participants will develop skills to collaboratively analyze incidents, synthesize insights, and identify actionable steps. ✓ Participants will gain knowledge of techniques for fostering reflective practice, including using structured tools and methods to document and analyze professional experiences. ✓ Participants will gain deeper insights into their professional practices through structured reflection and peer collaboration.
5. Description of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This activity helps participants reflect on practice-related incidents, analyze them collaboratively, and identify key insights. Through structured steps, they will describe events, explore interpretations, and work in teams to uncover themes and actionable steps for improvement, concluding with individual plans for implementation. <p>Introduction: The facilitator (F) welcomes the group and invites each participant to briefly summarize the actions taken since the last meeting. F then introduces a structured process designed to help the PLC reflect on and gain deeper insights into these actions. Using examples from participants' summaries, F connects the introduction to Phase 1.</p> <p>Phase 1: Describing Incidents (Completed Part A of Tool 1 with objective descriptions of incidents.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o F introduces Tool 1 and guides participants to focus on Part A, specifically the Documentation column. o Participants are directed to describe at least two incidents from their action or inquiry, using prompts provided in the tool. These prompts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ A problematic part of the action/inquiry. □ A part of the action/inquiry that worked well. □ An incident that created an emotion, impressed participants, or was unexpected. o F demonstrates how to write objective descriptions of incidents, avoiding analysis or interpretation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading Question: What happened in each incident, and how can you describe it without interpreting its meaning? <hr/> <p>Phase 2: Brainstorming Interpretations (Completed Part B of Tool 1 with individual interpretations and lessons learned)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o F explains Part B of Tool 1, specifically the Analyzing the Incident and What Can Be Learned columns. o Participants work individually to brainstorm and document thoughts about the incidents they described in Part A, using bullet points. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Focus areas for analysis include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Significant points or ideas from the incident. □ Connections to learning processes or participant roles. □ Lessons learned that can be generalized and applied to others. • Leading Question: What possible reasons, factors, or perspectives could explain what happened in each incident? <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 3: Collaborative Analysis (Completed Tool 2, Part B with collaborative analysis.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Participants write their names twice on their Tool 1 forms and cut the forms along the dotted lines to separate Part A and Part B into two sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Form-Part A (Documentation).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Form-Part B (Analysis and Learning). ○ F collects Form-Part A sections in Box A and Form-Part B sections in Box B. ○ Each participant randomly selects a form from Box A (not their own) and pairs with someone else. ○ In pairs, participants transfer the incidents from Form-Part A to Tool 2 and collaboratively analyze them. They focus on completing the Key Highlights and Lessons to Learn columns in Tool 2, discussing patterns, challenges, and insights. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading Question: What patterns, challenges, or opportunities emerge when interpreting these incidents collaboratively? <hr/> <p>Phase 4: Synthesizing and Organizing (Synthesized insights and themes, organized on A2 paper and documented in Tool 2.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pairs join with another pair to form a team. ○ Teams retrieve matching Form-Part B sections from Box B and organize all forms (Tool 1 and Tool 2) on an A2 sheet. ○ Teams use highlighters to identify similar ideas across analyses and synthesize insights, completing the What Can Be Learned column of Tool 2. • Leading Question: What themes or insights emerge from these incidents when analyzed collectively? How do they align with our inquiry focus? <hr/> <p>Phase 5: Presentation and Reflective Discussion (Group-level insights and a compiled summary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each team presents the themes and insights developed in Phase 4 to the larger group. ○ F facilitates a group discussion to summarize key insights and implications for practice. ○ A final summary of insights is compiled and shared with the group. • Leading Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are the key insights we gained from this reflective process about our inquiry and actions? ○ How do these insights inform our next steps? <hr/> <p>Closure - Individual action plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each participant reflects on the session's insights and formulates specific actions to address the issues or opportunities identified. ○ Participants share their planned actions with the group before concluding the session. • Leading Question: Based on the insights from today, what specific actions will you take to address the issues or opportunities identified? <hr/> <p>Summary of Tool Usage</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Phase 1</td> <td>Tool 1</td> <td>Part A</td> <td>Documenting incidents objectively.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phase 2</td> <td>Tool 1</td> <td>Part B</td> <td>Analyzing incidents individually and identifying lessons learned</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phase 3</td> <td>Part B</td> <td></td> <td>Collaborative analysis of incidents, focusing on shared insights.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phase 4</td> <td>Tool 2</td> <td>Part B</td> <td>Synthesizing and organizing themes collectively.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Phase 5</td> <td>Tool 2</td> <td>Part B</td> <td>Presenting and discussing themes and insights.</td> </tr> </table>	Phase 1	Tool 1	Part A	Documenting incidents objectively.	Phase 2	Tool 1	Part B	Analyzing incidents individually and identifying lessons learned	Phase 3	Part B		Collaborative analysis of incidents, focusing on shared insights.	Phase 4	Tool 2	Part B	Synthesizing and organizing themes collectively.	Phase 5	Tool 2	Part B	Presenting and discussing themes and insights.
Phase 1	Tool 1	Part A	Documenting incidents objectively.																		
Phase 2	Tool 1	Part B	Analyzing incidents individually and identifying lessons learned																		
Phase 3	Part B		Collaborative analysis of incidents, focusing on shared insights.																		
Phase 4	Tool 2	Part B	Synthesizing and organizing themes collectively.																		
Phase 5	Tool 2	Part B	Presenting and discussing themes and insights.																		
<p>6. PLC dimensions addressed</p>	<p>Dimension : Reflection & Inquiry 5.3 Encourage individual and group reflection and critical analysis of professional practices to identify learning goals</p>																				
<p>7. Learning outcomes for the participants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Techniques for fostering reflective practice. • Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask probing questions to stimulate critical thinking. ○ Make use of the group's previous knowledge and experiences to foster reflection and critical thinking. 																				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Commitment to fostering a reflective culture. o Valuing critical analysis as a tool for improvement.
8. Activity format	Individual, dyad, groups of four, whole group activities
9. Materials & tools	Tool 1. Reflection form (see Appendixes) Tool 2. Reflection form (see Appendixes) Tool 3: A2 paper (1 for each group of four) Tool 4: Highlighters in different colors
10. Room & preparation	A flexible arrangement of the furniture that accommodates both small group activities and group discussions.
11. Dimensions of inclusion	<p>F ensures that diverse beliefs and practices are respected and valued by all participants throughout the activity. F encourages participants to share their perspectives openly, both in pairs and in the whole group, creating a safe space for dialogue. F supports the group in identifying common ground achieved through reflection and discussion and highlights areas that require further exploration, fostering inclusivity and mutual understanding</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Phase 1: Describing Incidents F encourages participants to describe incidents without judgment, ensuring diverse perspectives are included using the following phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "Focus on describing what happened as you saw it, without analysis—everyone’s perspective is unique and important." o "This is a moment to capture events objectively, so we can later reflect on the diversity of experiences." <p>Examples:</p> <p>Phase 3: Collaborative Analysis F ensures equitable participation in pairs and redirect the discussion if one person dominates. Encourage mutual respect and value differing perspectives using the following phrases: "How can you both build on each other’s ideas to explore this incident further?"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "Remember, the goal here is to understand the incident through multiple lenses." <p>Phase 4: Synthesizing and Organizing F ensures that teams highlight common ground and appreciate differences. Guide them to recognize diverse perspectives while identifying shared themes using the following phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "What patterns or shared ideas do we see across our discussions?" o "Are there any differences that stand out? How might these offer new insights?"
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<p>Participants actively contribute to shaping collective understandings during the activity. Time is equitably distributed, allowing everyone to voice their concerns, suggestions, and proposals aligned with the activity's goals. F ensures a supportive environment by avoiding criticism of opinions and using open-ended, clarifying questions to promote dialogue and collaboration. This approach empowers participants to co-create knowledge and engage meaningfully with the process</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Introduction -Establish Inclusion and Democratic Values F explains the importance of diversity in perspectives and set the tone for respectful and equitable participation using the following phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "Everyone's experiences and views are valuable, and this is a space where we respect and learn from our differences." o "Let’s aim to share time equitably so everyone has a chance to contribute." <p>Phase 2: Brainstorming Interpretations</p>

	<p>F Facilitates brainstorming in a way that avoids criticism and promotes sharing ideas openly using the following phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o "What other interpretations or possibilities can we consider for this incident?" o "There are no wrong ideas—every perspective can help us understand this more fully."
<p>13. Appropriation for digital PLCs</p>	<p>Breakout rooms and Padlet.com are effective tools for facilitating digital PLCs. Tools 1 and 2 can be seamlessly adapted into digital formats, preserving the unique approach of sharing columns. For instance, participants can complete specific columns of Tools 1 and 2 using collaborative platforms like Google Sheets or Padlet, where each column is treated as a separate interactive element. Once completed, the sections can be digitally exchanged among participants via breakout rooms or shared boards. This approach maintains the integrity of the activity, allowing participants to engage in brainstorming, analysis, and reflection in a structured and collaborative digital environment .</p>
<p>14. References & suggested sources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knauf, H. (2022). <i>Pedagogical Documentation in Early Childhood Education: Process-Oriented Procedures for Documenting Education and Development</i>. Germany: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden. • Edwards, C. P., Gandini, L., Forman, G. E. (2022). <i>The Hundred Languages of Children: The Reggio Emilia Experience in Transformation</i>. Canada. • Stacey, S. (2023). <i>Pedagogical Documentation in Early Childhood: Sharing Children's Learning and Teachers' Thinking</i>. USA: Redleaf Press. • Schön, D. A. (2017). <i>The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action</i>. Routledge. https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315237473/reflective-practitioner-donald-schön
<p>15. Appendix following</p>	<p>yes</p>

Appendix

Instructions for the Tools

There are two tools: Tool 1 and Tool 2, each with a specific purpose in the activity.

- **Tool 1: Reflecting on Incidents**

This tool has two parts: Part A and Part B.

Part A: Describing Incidents

1. Write your name at the top of the tool.
2. Recall and describe specific incidents from your action or inquiry.
3. Choose from the following categories of the right column

Part B: Analyzing Incidents

1. Analyze the incidents described in Part A.
2. Answer the following questions:
 - What important points or ideas can be highlighted? How does this connect to the learning process or the roles of participants?
 - What is the main lesson learned? Summarize the takeaway from the incident in a way that others can also benefit.

- **Tool 2: Collaborative Analysis**

This tool is used during group work to deepen the analysis of incidents and synthesize collective insights.

Part B: Analyzing Incidents

1. Work in pairs or teams to explore the incidents documented in Tool 1.
2. Focus on:
 - Key highlights: What are the significant points or ideas from the incident? Consider its connection to learning, participant roles, or group dynamics.
 - Lessons to learn: What is the main insight or lesson from the incident? Summarize it so it can inform future actions or practices

Tool 1. Reflecting upon action

Name:		Name:	
Part A		Part B	
	<p>Documentation (recall, isolate and describe specific incidences: dialogues, actions, who did/said what, you may refer to participants expressions and gestures). Build the incident on something very specific someone did or said and try to describe what preceded and what followed</p>	<p>Analyzing the incident (what are the important things/ideas that can be highlighted within the incident/this might be connected to the learning procedure, the role of the participants etc)</p>	<p>What can be learned (try and summarize what is the main lesson that can be learned from this incident in a manner that can be generalized and useful to others)</p>
Describe one part of the action/inquiry which you feel was problematic.			
Describe one part of the action/inquiry which you feel worked well.			
Describe one incident from the action/inquiry that created a certain emotion to one/some of the participants or you			

<p>Describe one incident from the action/inquiry that impressed you and has to do with something someone did/said</p>			
<p>Describe one incident from the action/inquiry that impressed you and has to do with something you did/said</p>			
<p>Describe an incident from the action/inquiry that you remember vividly.</p>			
<p>Describe an incident from the action/inquiry that was unexpected.</p>			

Tool 2:

Part B	
<p>Analyzing the incident (what are the important things/ideas that can be highlighted within the incident/this might be connected to the learning procedure, the role of the participants etc)</p>	<p>What can be learned (try and summarize what is the main lesson that can be learned from this incident in a manner that can be generalized and useful to others)</p>



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"> ✓ 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) ✓ 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) ✓ Develop an appreciation for structured and goal-oriented approaches to meeting planning and execution within the PLC. (Promote a Culture of Structured Collaboration) ✓ 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)
5. Description of the activity	<p>Introduction (5')</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 strategic 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>Work phase 1: Overview of the already implemented organizational dimensions (15')</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>Work phase 2: Extension of practice (30-40')</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>Closure (5') At the end of the process, F summarizes the joint achievement which should be visible on the table, too.</p>
<p>6. PLC dimensions</p>	<p>Organizational Dimension 6.1 Effectively manage organizational aspects of PLC-work to ensure regular meetings and maintain the focus on tasks</p>
<p>7. Learning outcomes for the participants</p>	<p>According to WP2.4 Knowledge: o Tools and techniques that can aid in scheduling and task management. Skills: o Create and distribute agendas to keep meetings focused and productive. o Manage time effectively during meetings to cover all planned topics. Attitudes: o Valuing structured and goal-oriented meetings.</p> <p>Further Learning Outcomes Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how structured meetings contribute to effective collaboration <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn best practices for balancing flexibility and consistency in and around meeting • scheduling and agenda management • 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 • Develop skills for efficiently recording meeting outcomes and decisions <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to Inclusivity • Develop a proactive attitude toward continuity and productivity in meetings. • Openness to using tools and adopting new practices

8. Activity format	whole group activities
9. Materials & tools	<p>Material 1: information card: organizational good practice for efficient PLC work Material 2: moderation cards in at least 3 colors & pens Material 3: picture of the organizational dimensions (printed big, in color) Material 4: (non-obligatory) sticky dots in 3 colors Material 5: camera or mobile phone Tool 1: Short Questionnaire: Guiding questions for organizational aspects Tool 2: Check list of practice on the background of organizational dimensions Tool 3: Helpful Questions for the exchange about elaboration organizational aspects</p>
10. Room & preparation	An arrangement of the furniture that accommodates a whole group discussion, best with a table
11. Dimensions of inclusion	<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"> • 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. • F leads the group to consider how to apply tools that can easily be handled by all. • 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. • 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.
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<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>
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	<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"> • work with a collaboration board. • use virtual sticky notes (comparable to Material 2), virtual coloring (comes close to Material 4). • include the digital picture (Material 3). • run the checklist on the screen with one person writing. • Collect lists by a white board.
14. References & suggested sources	<p>Kansteiner, K. & Welther, S. (2025). Praxishandbuch für Professionelle Lerngemeinschaften in der Kooperation zwischen Kitas sowie Kitas und Grundschulen. Weinheim: Beltz https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/fruehpaedagogik/produkte/details/55218-praxishandbuch-professionelle-lerngemeinschaften-in-kita-und-kita-grundschul-kooperationen.html (in German)</p> <p>https://wirmachen.wien/how-to/how-to-gruppenorganisation/ (in German)</p>
15. Appendix	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

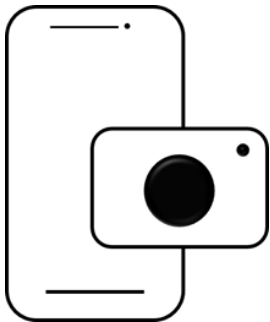
Guiding Questions for Organizational Aspects

- 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?

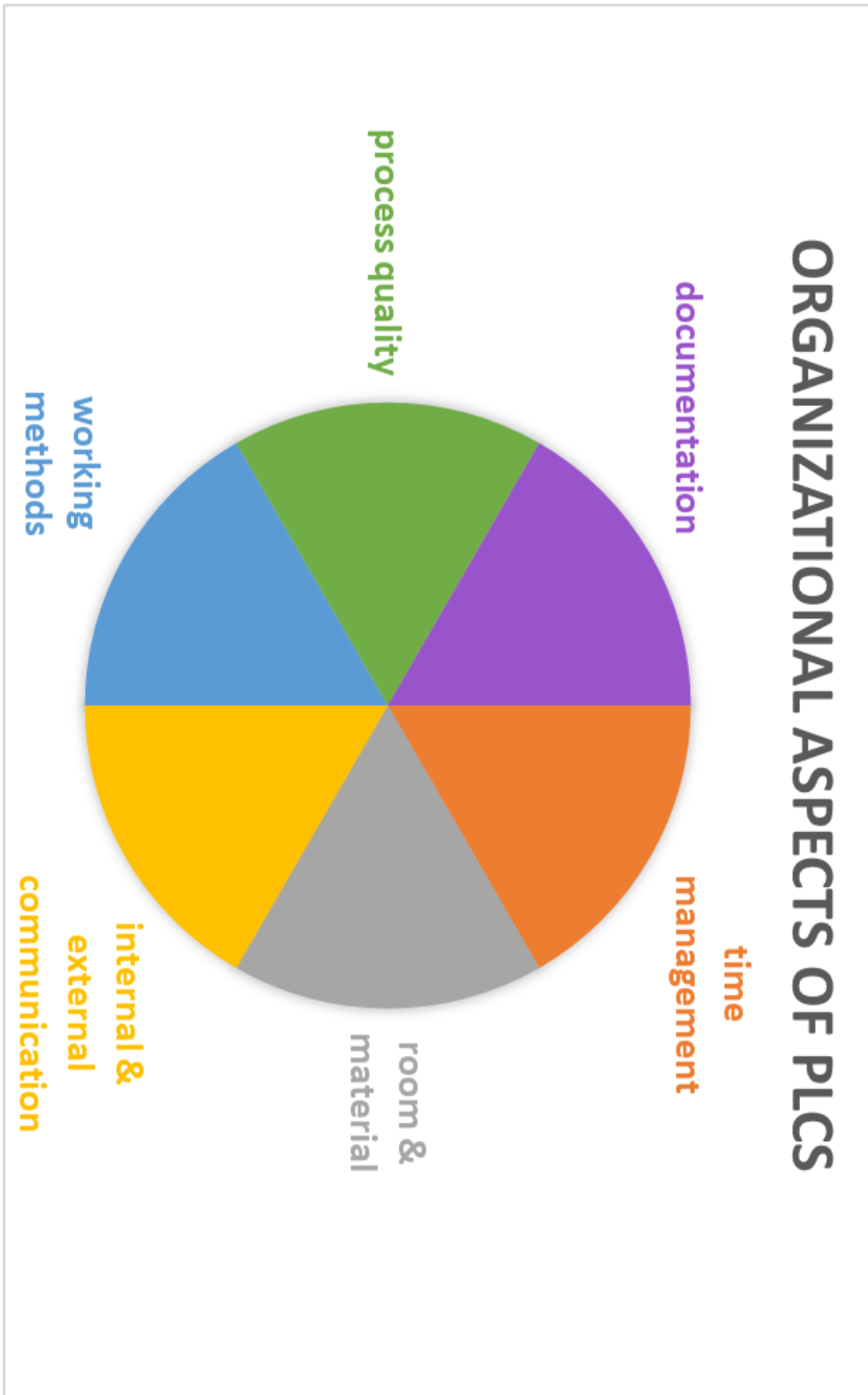
Material 4: Sticky Dots



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
Time Management				
period, steps, time slots				
consulting about time aspects				
role to watch the time during meeting				
handling time strictly or flexible				
Room and Material				
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?



ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION

Getting organized: How far have we come?

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 - How well have we improved in the organizational dimension?
2. Duration of practice	appr. 45 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Participants starting in a PLC
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Running an evaluation on organizational aspects as a kind of self-monitoring ✓ identifying successful and less successful procedures ✓ developing practical changes for more efficient collaboration
5. Description of the activity	<p>Introduction (5')</p> <p>a) F welcomes all participants and gives an overview of the PLC meeting. The self-monitoring and subsequent consulting will take about an hour.</p> <p>b) F introduces the idea of the activity to recall the recently agreed on developments regarding organizational aspects and to reflect on what was successfully implemented and what might need additional efforts. The aim was to support cooperation with a binding organization. Activity 1 covered organizational dimensions for a detailed overview, activity 2 addresses the monitoring of a later regular PLC session including planning of a next step of development with an action plan.</p> <p>Work phase 1: Overview of the development status of the organizational dimensions (5')</p> <p>a) F lays out a large photo of the edited picture in the last meeting with an overview of the organizational aspects that had been discussed and agreed on to develop in activity 1. The picture can also be printed out and used as a handout for all participants.</p> <p>b) F asks the group to use small smileys (alternatively multi-colored post-its) and mark which aspects they think have already been implemented well and which ones still need to be worked on. The members place the smileys according to their personal impression and are asked not to discuss it, yet. This provides an easy overview of how the individual members experience the implementation.</p> <p>Workphase 2: Groups systemize respected field and develop suggestions for practical development (15-20')</p> <p>a) F and the group focus on the 2-3 organizational aspects that are assessed most critically (no smileys). F leads into the discussion by asking how the participants recognize that the development of the respected organizational aspect was not successful and why. F also asks the participants to reflect on what impact the aspects that have not been improved yet have on the groups proceeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you identify that an aspect has not been pursued better (naming indicator(s))? • Why has it not improved so far (reasons and possibly needed resources)? • How does it make the target-oriented work more difficult (awareness about the connection to PLC method)? <p>F notes the aspects mentioned by the participants on moderation cards for everyone to keep the overview of the exchange.</p> <p>b) F also invites the participants to reflect on whether the originally agreed way to improve was not suitable or just carried out poorly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the way we had thought of originally still the right one and we just have to follow through with it or do we need to think of another idea? • If so, how else could we accomplish better in this organizational dimension and what help do we possibly need? <p>F notes potential new ideas on moderation cards (new color).</p> <p>Step a and b can be taken sequentially or be combined.</p> <p>Closure (5')</p> <p>At the end of the process, F summarizes the main targets the participants have agreed on. F also reminds the participants to follow up their jobs if any have been planned.</p>
6. PLC dimensions	<p>Organizational Dimension</p> <p>6.2 Monitor activities and progress of the PLC and handle documentation efficiently</p>

<p>7. Learning outcomes for the participants</p>	<p>Knowledge: o Understand progress monitoring and evaluation techniques. o Tools for monitoring activities and maintaining records.</p> <p>Skills: o Monitor progress and documenting outcomes of PLC activities.</p> <p>Attitudes: o Commitment to transparency and accountability in monitoring progress.</p>
<p>8. Activity format</p>	<p>whole group activity</p>
<p>9. Materials & tools</p>	<p>Material 1: Picture of the results of activity 1 (as photo or handout) Material 2: Moderation cards Material 3: Stickers (Smiley, colors) Tool 1: Key questions for reflection (can be cut as cards) Tool 2: Action Plan Template for detailed planning</p>
<p>10. Room & preparation</p>	<p>Group table</p>
<p>11. Dimensions of inclusion</p>	<p>F takes into regard, that the agreed-on improvements might not have been followed consequently due to single participants and that this could be brought up in the discussion. F should turn such a discussion towards the question of help that might be needed to follow through consistently next time Maybe not all participants took part in activity 1. In this case F makes sure that one of the PLC members explains how the picture came together (Material 1) and thus everyone can catch up with the process. If there are participants in the PLC who are visually impaired, F describes the picture and helps to stick on the stickers.</p>
<p>12. Promotion of democratic values and practices</p>	<p>Each member has the chance to take part in the critical reflection, development, and decision making. The final agreement on organizational aspects will be based on the ideas and possibilities of all participants.</p>
<p>13. Appropriation for digital PLCs</p>	<p>The steps for monitoring the development of the organizational aspects can be used in an online meeting, too.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchanging online can be done with a collaboration board. • The picture can be shown on the board. • The (smiley) sticky dots in different colors to differ. • The key questions can be posted. The template can be filled in in a joint process.
<p>14. References & suggested sources</p>	<p>Kansteiner, K., Welther, S. & Schmid, S. (2023). Professionelle Lerngemeinschaften für Schulleitungen und Lehrkräfte. Chancen des Kooperationsformats für Schulentwicklung und Professionalisierung. Weinheim: Beltz. https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/erziehungswissenschaft/produkte/details/48917-professionelle-lerngemeinschaften-fuer-schulleitungen-und-lehrkraefte.html (in German)</p> <p>Kansteiner, K. & Welther, S. (2025). Praxishandbuch für Professionelle Lerngemeinschaften in der Kooperation zwischen Kitas sowie Kitas und Grundschulen. Weinheim: Beltz (in press) https://www.beltz.de/fachmedien/fruehpaedagogik/produkte/details/55218-praxishandbuch-professionelle-lerngemeinschaften-in-kita-und-kita-grundschul-kooperationen.html (in German)</p>
<p>15. Appendix</p>	<p>Yes</p>

APPENDIX

Material 1: Picture of the results of activity 1 (as photo or handout)



Material 2: Moderation Cards





















Material 3: Sticky Dots



Tool 1: Key questions for reflection (cards, can be cut out)

Indicators	
<p>How do we recognize that an aspect has not yet been successfully improved or pursued successfully? <i>What strategies for checking it do we know? What specific indicators are relevant?</i></p>	<p>•••</p>
Inhibiting factors	
<p>Why have we not improved so far? <i>What specific mechanisms and/or challenges can we identify?</i></p>	<p>•••</p>
Effects	
<p>How much does it hamper the targeted work of our PLC if we don't optimize aspects that are not yet fully developed? <i>What happens if we do not improve this aspect(s)? What could our PLC be like if we addressed these aspects in an engaged way?</i></p>	<p>•••</p>
Pursuing development	
<p>Is the way we have been thinking about developing the organizational aspect still the right one? <i>Do we simply have to continue along this path consequently? Can we assist our process with an action plan?</i></p>	<p>•••</p>
Alternativ option for development	
<p>Should we rather pursue a different idea at this point and what could it look like? <i>Where can we find examples of aspect xy? Who knows someone who has experience with this? Where can we look it up/do research?</i></p>	<p>•••</p>
Support	
<p>What kind of supporte do we need? <i>What external support could be helpful? What are our expertises?</i></p>	<p>•••</p>

Tool 2: Action Plan Template for detailed planning

Organizational Aspect	 
1. Goal	<p>Towards what quality of practice do we want to improve this organizational aspect?</p>    
2. Rational	<p>Why exactly do we focus on this aspect's improvement?</p>    
3. Planning and Resources	<p>What steps do we take to accomplish this? Who is responsible? What help/resources do we need?</p>    
4. Indicators for Improvement	<p>How will we know when we have reached the goal?</p>    

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ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



DIGITAL DIMENSION

Human connection in digital spaces: Engaging online PLCs

LeaFaP

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

Digital Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	Engaging participants and building a trustful atmosphere in online PLCs
2. Duration of practice	20 minutes per session
3. Prior experience of the PLC	No prior PLC experience required—ideal for new participants
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Foster active participation and engagement among all members of the online PLC. ✓ Build a trusting and open atmosphere that encourages honest sharing and constructive feedback in a secure online environment.
5. Description of the activity	<p>Introduction: The activity is conducted in its full form until a trusting atmosphere has developed (at least three times). Afterward, the activation exercises are conducted independently.</p> <p>The facilitator (F) welcomes the participants and initiates a 20-minute phase to activate all PLC members.</p> <p>Possible ways to start:</p> <p>Preparation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do I want to achieve? Each participant briefly states their personal goal for the session, helping to set clear expectations and provide direction. <p>Initiation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Lightning Round Each participant shares a sentence describing a current challenge or goal, which helps reveal common themes. 3. Expectations Poll or Chat Question Participants indicate their expectations through an interactive poll or chat question to recognize shared interests and focal points in real time. <p>Execution of the Activity</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Brainstorming Session Participants contribute their main concerns or ideas as short bullet points on a digital whiteboard, capturing the group’s focal points. 5. Breakout Room Discussions In small groups within breakout rooms, participants discuss guiding questions. They then return to the main session to share a central point from their discussions. 6. Question Check-In Each participant posts a current question in the chat, and others can indicate relevance with a "thumbs up," allowing for shared interests and concerns to emerge. <p>Options for Warm-up Exercises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the “One-Word Check-In” each participant describes their mood with a single word in the chat to provide a quick snapshot of the current atmosphere. - In the “Highlight of the Week” each briefly shares a positive experience or achievement from the past week to create an optimistic environment and to foster optimism. - In the “Three Quick Questions” the facilitator asks simple yes/no questions in the chat, and participants respond with reactions or emojis to gauge a topic-related mood and foster interactivity. (e.g., topic: classroom management - “I

	<p>had meaningful interactions with students during recess duty this week.” “I was dissatisfied with the disciplinary situation in my class multiple times this week.”)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the “Virtual Hand Raise” participants raise their hand if they agree with a topic-related statement from F, to highlight shared challenges. - In “Truth or Lie” each person shares one statement about themselves, and the group guesses which is false to break the ice, with explanations depending on the situation and group size. - In “First Association” F shows an image or mentions a word, and participants write their first association in the chat to quickly introduce the topic.
6. PLC dimensions addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Dimension (main dimension), but also • Relational Dimension • Communication Dimension
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>What attitudes are the participants going to develop? Communication Dimension: The participants develop an appreciation for open, respectful exchange and build trust and empathy for their colleagues to foster a supportive team culture.</p>
8. Activity format	Individual, dyad, whole group activities
9. Materials & tools	<p>Here are some digital tools for various applications, aligned with the description:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Video Conferencing Systems: Zoom (https://zoom.us), Microsoft Teams (https://www.microsoft.com/teams), BigBlueButton (Open Source, https://bigbluebutton.org) 2. Digital Whiteboards: Miro (https://miro.com), Jamboard (Google, https://jamboard.google.com), Excalidraw (Open Source, https://excalidraw.com) 3. Survey and Polling Tools: Mentimeter (https://www.mentimeter.com), Slido (https://www.sli.do), Poll Everywhere (https://www.pollerywhere.com) 4. Padlet for Collaborative Content: Padlet (https://padlet.com), Trello (https://trello.com) 5. Documentation and Note-taking: Google Docs (https://docs.google.com), Microsoft OneNote (https://www.microsoft.com/onenote), Etherpad (Open Source, https://etherpad.org) 6. Breakout Room Functionality: Zoom Breakout Rooms (https://zoom.us), Microsoft Teams Breakout Rooms (https://www.microsoft.com/teams), Jitsi Meet (Open Source, breakout feature possible, https://meet.jit.si) 7. Interactive Brainstorming Tools: Stormboard (https://stormboard.com), IdeaBoardz (Open Source, https://ideaboardz.com) 8. Association Tools for Quick Visualizations: Wordwall (https://wordwall.net), Canva (https://www.canva.com), Wordclouds (Open Source, https://www.wordclouds.com)
10. Room & preparation	Online
11. Dimensions of inclusion	<p>Among others: Respect and Inclusion: The facilitator creates an open space where all perspectives are accepted by encouraging the sharing of personal goals and challenges, highlighting the diversity within the PLC.</p> <p>Dialogue-Oriented Inclusion: Through breakout rooms and structured discussions, all participants have the opportunity to actively contribute and share their ideas in a respectful, supportive environment. Participants find opportunities to express themselves, ensuring their thoughts are heard even when they might not otherwise have a chance to voice them.</p>
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<p>1. Equal Participation: All participants have the opportunity to actively share their opinions and shape decisions together. To monitor and encourage equal participation in real-time, facilitators can use tools like:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Polls or Quick Surveys: These allow everyone to voice their opinion simultaneously, providing an instant gauge of group consensus on a topic. ● Structured Turn-Taking: In discussions, each person is given a designated time to share their thoughts, ensuring that quieter voices are heard alongside more vocal participants. ● Round-Robin in Breakout Groups: In small group settings, each participant has a specific turn to contribute, fostering a balanced exchange of ideas. ● Chat Features with Reaction Options: Participants can engage by giving "thumbs up" or other reactions, promoting active, yet unobtrusive, participation. <p>By using these methods, the group can create an environment where all voices are valued and participation is more equitable.</p> <p>2. Fair Exchange: Activities encourage respectful dialogue, ensuring that diverse viewpoints are acknowledged and discussed.</p> <p>3. Collective Decision-Making: Structured discussions allow everyone to contribute to solutions, reinforcing a democratic approach.</p>
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	Activity is meant /designed for digital PLCs only
14. References & suggested sources	<p>Peböck, K. (2022). Online-Lehre aus der Perspektive der Akteur-Netzwerk-Theorie (ANT) und der Resonanzpädagogik am Beispiel der Videokonferenz. In T. Hanstein & A. K. Lanig (Eds.), Virtuelle und hybride Lösungen in institutionalisierten Bildungsprozessen. Impulse für die didaktische Transformation (p 23-31). kopaed.</p> <p>Schroffenegger, T. (2020). Didaktische Überlegungen zur Nutzung von Videokonferenzsystemen in der Zeit des Corona-Shutdowns. F&E Edition. Die Forschungszeitschrift der Pädagogischen Hochschule Vorarlberg, 26, (p 39-52).</p>
15. Appendix following	none

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Erasmus+ Project LeaFaP

ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



DIGITAL DIMENSION

Working smarter together: Digital strategies for team success

LeaFaP

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

Digital Dimension	
1. Focus of the activity	4 Activities for Digital Optimization: Team Management and Work Organization in Virtual and Hybrid Environments
2. Duration of practice	120 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	Participants Beginning in a Professional Learning Community (PLC)
4. Goals of the activity	<p>The proposed objectives have been associated with the activities as learning objectives.</p> <p>ACTIVITY 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop the ability to organize and manage online or hybrid PLC meetings using digital platforms, enabling effective configuration and management of virtual sessions with a range of digital tools. ✓ Strengthen participants' digital competence for efficient teamwork management and time organization in virtual settings. <p>ACTIVITY 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Encourage the use of collaborative digital tools for real-time document creation and graphic organizers, learning to apply design principles and digital tools to produce clear and visually appealing educational materials. <p>ACTIVITY 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promote reflection and idea-sharing using digital tools in an inclusive, interactive virtual environment, fostering interaction, critical analysis, and participation from all members. <p>ACTIVITY 4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Build skills to solve common technical issues in virtual environments: Train participants to identify and solve basic technical issues that may arise during virtual sessions, such as audio, video, connection, or specific tool-related problems. ✓ Strengthen participants' digital competence for efficient teamwork management and time organization in virtual settings.
5. Description of the activity	<p>Currently, many meetings can be organized through online platforms where PLC members can share ideas, materials, and reflective reports using digital tools. Another important aspect that will be addressed in the activities is the inclusion of data protection topics (GDPR).</p> <p>This approach involves four activities designed to guide participants in effectively using digital tools, promoting familiarization, practical application, and collaborative reflection.</p> <p>Activity 1: Getting to know Digital Platforms and Tools <i>(Estimated Time: 30 minutes)</i> The goal is to build capacity for organizing and managing online or hybrid meetings using digital platforms (such as Zoom, Teams, or Google Meet). Participants will learn how to set up meetings, use functions like screen sharing, create polls, and organize breakout rooms.</p> <p>As a reinforcement, an online session will be organized where participants take on different roles (facilitator, participant, moderator) to practice managing advanced functions and engaging members.</p> <p>Activity 2: Collaborative Creation and Editing of Documents and Graphic Organizers <i>(Estimated Time: 30 minutes)</i> This activity aims to encourage the use of collaborative digital tools for real-time creation and editing of documents and graphic organizers. Tools like Google Docs, Canva, and others will be introduced for collaborative document creation and visual organization. Through a group activity, participants will work together to design a graphic organizer or document that summarizes key ideas from a recent PLC session,</p>

	<p>reinforcing the activity by sharing the completed work and highlighting the importance of visual clarity and design.</p> <p>Activity 3: Facilitating Reflection and Interactive Participation in Virtual Environments <i>(Estimated Time: 30 minutes)</i> This activity aims to encourage reflection and the exchange of ideas using digital tools within an inclusive, interactive virtual setting. Participants will engage in a collective reflection activity on a theme previously explored in the PLC, utilizing tools like Padlet, Mentimeter, or discussion forums.</p> <p>To explore further, participants can engage in small-group debates or discussions via breakout rooms, where each member reflects on the learning acquired from previous sessions. At the end of the activity, a group summary will be shared using a collaboratively created graphic organizer.</p> <p>Activity 4: Teamwork Planning and Management Using Digital Tools <i>(Estimated Time: 30 minutes)</i> This final activity focuses on strengthening digital competencies for efficient teamwork and time management in virtual environments. Participants will use project management tools like Trello, Microsoft Planner, or similar platforms to create a team work plan. They will define roles, deadlines, and tasks, organizing time and resources efficiently.</p> <p>Additionally, participants will receive training in troubleshooting common technical issues with a shared resource repository. It is suggested to rotate the "technical support" role among participants in each session, gathering constant feedback to improve these resources.</p> <p>A template will also be provided for managing work timelines, which may be helpful in PLC meeting management (TOOL 1 and TOOL 2).</p>
<p>6. PLC dimensions addressed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Competence • Collaboration • Inquiry and Reflection • Shared Learning and Knowledge <p>In summary, the dimensions of collaboration, shared reflection, use of digital tools, continuous improvement, inclusive community, and the sharing of best practices are the key areas developed through the previous activities and objectives, aligned with the efficient functioning of a Professional Learning Community (PLC).</p>
<p>7. Learning outcomes for the participants</p>	<p><u>What knowledge will the participants develop?</u></p> <p>An initial understanding of digital competence will be developed, using the context of a PLC, in addition to promoting inquiry and reflection, as well as shared learning and inclusive participation. Thus, the learnings with each of the dimensions are:</p> <p>Digital Competence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various digital platforms for online or hybrid collaboration. • Collaborative tools to develop effective digital competences in professional environments, as well as to promote analysis and reflection. • Participants will develop knowledge about the design and creation of digital documents and graphic organizers using collaborative tools. <p>Collaboration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will learn to use platforms that facilitate remote teamwork, fostering real-time interaction. • They will use tools that allow multiple users to work simultaneously on the same document or graphic, promoting co-creation. <p>Inquiry and Reflection.</p>

- They will learn methods for using digital platforms that promote reflection and feedback from all participants.
- They will be trained to use specific tools as means of inquiry and to guide joint reflections.

Shared Learning and Knowledge.

- The platforms will allow for sharing ideas, documents, and reflections, facilitating access to collective knowledge.
- Participants will become familiar with the use of graphic organizers that promote the visualization of ideas and joint reflections.

What skills will the participants develop?

Participants will develop key skills, including the following dimensions:

Digital Competence.

- They will develop the ability to manage online meetings, including organizing sessions and using advanced functions.
- They will learn to use the features of video conferencing platforms (screen sharing, polls, breakout rooms) to energize sessions.

Collaboration.

- They will be capable of facilitating effective collaboration among participants during online sessions.
- They will promote collaboration in critical analysis and problem-solving through interactive digital discussions.
- They will improve the organization and coordination of the team, ensuring effective and smooth collaboration in the planning and execution of tasks.

Inquiry and Reflection.

- They will facilitate reflective discussions and interactive sessions that foster feedback and collective learning.
- They will facilitate activities that promote inquiry and joint reflection among participants.

Shared Learning and Knowledge.

- They will use digital tools to share and coordinate learning within the team.
- They will encourage the exchange of best practices and experiences, contributing to the construction of collective learning.

What attitudes will the participants develop?

Participants will cultivate attitudes of openness based on digital competence, impacting the following dimensions:

Digital Competence.

- They will adopt a positive and proactive attitude toward the use of digital tools to create inclusive and interactive environments.
- They will value the features that facilitate interaction and equity in participation with the tools presented.

Collaboration.

- They will foster an environment of active collaboration where all members can participate and contribute equitably.
- They will appreciate the importance of teamwork and the co-creation of ideas, using digital tools to encourage cooperation.

Inquiry and Reflection.

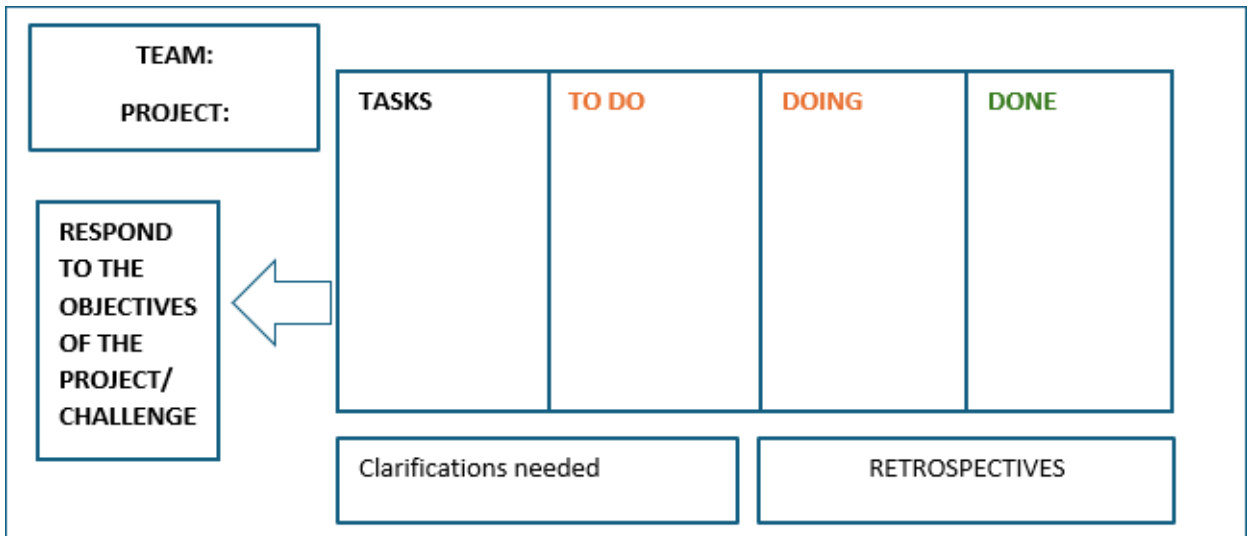
- They will commit to facilitating discussions that promote shared reflection and critical inquiry.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They will adopt a collaborative approach to joint reflection, recognizing the value of collective analysis with the use of the provided tools. <p>Shared Learning and Knowledge.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They will maintain an open attitude toward joint learning and the collective creation of knowledge. They will commit to mutual learning and knowledge sharing in a digital environment.
8. Activity format	Individual, pair and group activities.
9. Materials & tools	Tool 1: Planning and Managing Teamwork. Tool 2: Thinking Routine "Dam Roam 6x6."
10. Room & preparation	The chairs and tables in the room will be arranged in a circle to make both oral and visual communication easier. Participants will also be provided with tools in photocopied sheets.
11. Dimensions of inclusion	To explain the process, it will be carried out in a room equipped with computers for individual or pair use, allowing participants to practice the resources provided.
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	<p>The use of digital tools in online learning and collaboration fosters democratic values by allowing active, open, and equitable participation from all members of the team or community.</p> <p>Digital platforms also facilitate transparency in communication and decision-making, a fundamental value in democratic environments.</p> <p>Finally, democratic practices are reinforced by promoting a culture of respect for the diversity of opinions and the inclusion of all voices in collective debates and reflections.</p>
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	This activity will promote the development of digital competences through the use of digital tools to create documents and graphic organizers, as well as to encourage reflection and participation from all members in online sessions. Therefore, it inherently includes the adaptation for online meetings of a PLC.
14. References & suggested sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents created: Reports, Results, Guide. The tools are self-developed. Data protection topics for further information.
15. Appendix following	Yes. See the tools detailed below.

APPENDIX

TOOL 1: PLANNING AND MANAGING TEAMWORK.

The Kanban methodology is a visual project management method implemented through boards. These boards allow teams to visualize their workflow and task load. Work is organized into columns that represent different stages of the process, facilitating management and tracking of progress.



As an example of Tool 1, an infographic created by Patricia Santos is attached, who was invited to develop a clarifying class in the Primary Education degree program in the subject of Theory of Education at the Faculty of Education Sciences (2021).

Herramienta de gestión de trabajo cooperativo: kaNban



TOOL 2: THINKING ROUTINE "DAM ROAM 6X6

This tool consists of a thinking routine that includes: who, when, how much, how, where, and why. To do this, it is necessary to list or categorize the contents, organize thoughts and actions to be developed, and schematically draw the process.

TITLE OF THE ACTION/CONTENT TO BE DEVELOPED	
WHO?	WHEN?
HOW MUCH?	HOW?
WHERE?	WHY?

As an example of Tool 2, an infographic created by Patricia Santos is attached, who was invited to develop a clarifying class in the Primary Education degree program in the subject of Theory of Education at the Faculty of Education Sciences (2021).

DISEÑAMOS: RUTINA DE PENSAMIENTO 6X6 DE DAM ROAM
@Patrysa10

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QUIÉN

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ACTIVITIES to set up PLCs and facilitate inquiry & reflection



DIGITAL DIMENSION

Tidy up, tune in: Decluttering for a more focused virtual PLC

LeaFaP

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

Digital Dimension

1. Focus of the activity	Using a Virtual Environment for decluttering a PLC
2. Duration of practice	Appr. 60-90 minutes
3. Prior experience of the PLC	This activity can be developed by any PLC group, even in its initial stages when there is no previous experience.
4. Goals of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Design a collaborative Google Site to facilitate communication and organization within the teaching workgroup. ✓ develop digital competencies related to the creation, editing, and management of online platforms. ✓ Optimize the management of shared resources, documents, and activities through a common digital tool. ✓ Foster collaboration and the exchange of best practices among workgroup members. ✓ Enhance the development of a PLC by leveraging digital tools. ✓ Facilitate access to updated and relevant information for continuous professional improvement. ✓ Promote autonomous and collaborative learning in the integration of digital technologies in the educational field.
5. Description of the activity	<p>The facilitator (F) welcomes the group and explains the importance of developing digital competence.</p> <p>A few years ago, all work interactions were carried out on paper, but today digital tools have transformed collaborative work. We are trying to move from piecemeal uploaded documents, which causes a sense of fragmentation and problems due to different versions, to an updated online environment which can be used whether synchronous or asynchronous.</p> <p>As an easy-implementing solution to these issues, we propose the use of different tools from a free GSuite. This is not a specific VLE, but the potential advantages and flexibility could have a high impact in the digital communication of PLC, providing a functional and aesthetic environment to share the common improvements.</p> <p>We propose the facilitator promote a virtual meeting with <i>Google Meet</i> to show and explain the shared environment, built with Google Sites and with edit permissions for every member. This is a responsible, inclusive and flexible platform to work and it is usually well-known by participants, but if it is not, the learning curve is so low.</p> <p>If the facilitator has no previous experience with Google Sites we propose this video to see before the meeting:</p> <p>How To Use Google Sites To Make a Website 2024 (Step By Step)</p> <p>We propose an initial structure for the Site (see examples in Appendix 1) to build during the meeting, but it could be adapted anytime for the particular needs of the group, even if they change along the development of the work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land page: where the group hosts their main aspects, frequent-use links, motivational stuff, reminders of meetings structure, etc. ● Action plan: this section is useful for embedded diagrams, images, project managing tools, etc. as static content in the sense to be administered only by facilitators or selected members to show the challenges to achieve. ● Sandbox: in digital environments, a sandbox is a safe space to carry out tests without the risk of damaging the final work. This section is perfect to embed editable formats like Google Docs (word processor), Google Slides (keynotes and slides) and Google Sheets (spreadsheets). ● Events: a page with a shared calendar where the facilitator could give permissions to create and edit events or only to consult them. It is important to highlight that, in addition to the information inside the Site, the calendar events and detail could be embedded in personal devices through gadgets. ● Results: final documents, images, materials,... obtained achieving every milestone of the common work. <p>Facilitators explain the different kinds of information in the Site and the ways every member will interact with them. This meeting is a good moment to analyze the development of digital competence of every single person in order to ensure extra help for those who need it. Even the group can reach agreements about digital mentors among advanced and less-experienced members. If it is necessary, the Site could include a <i>Resources</i> section with tutorials and extra information. In future meetings could be arranged as a point in the agenda to review the contributions to the common site. It is possible to put in charge of different sections to specific people.</p>
6. PLC dimensions addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Digital dimension ✓ Collaborative dimension ✓ Communicative dimension

	✓ Relational dimension
7. Learning outcomes for the participants	<p>Digital dimension</p> <p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital platforms for online and hybrid meetings. • Best practices for engaging members in virtual environments. • Collaborative tools for real-time document creation and editing. • Digital tools and strategies for promoting reflection, interaction, and engagement. <p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Set up and manage online or hybrid sessions using digital platforms.</i> • <i>Collaborate with others in real-time to create and edit documents.</i> • <i>Facilitate reflective activities and discussions using digital tools.</i> • <i>Create and use platforms for sharing best practices and success stories</i> <p>Attitudes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Commitment to creating an inclusive and interactive virtual environment.</i> • <i>Valuing clarity and visual appeal in educational materials.</i> • <i>Openness to using various digital tools to enhance engagement</i>
8. Activity format	Group activity
9. Materials & tools	Material: Digital devices: PC, laptop, tablet, smartphones,... Tools: Gsuite (Gmail) free accounts
10. Room & preparation	In a online session is useful take into account some aspects, mainly related to safety in the Digital Competence for Teachers framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stable online connection • A comfortable and well-lit place
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 and the whole group and thus encourages spaces for dialogue. F assists in summing up the common ground achieved through reflection and discussions and issues for further exploration among the group. Especially for online activities: Accessibility and Inclusivity means ensuring that the online room is accessible to all participants, including those with disabilities, by providing features like closed captioning, screen reader compatibility, and easy navigation
12. Promotion of democratic values and practices	We will not discuss whether we agree or disagree on the strengths or needs that each member expresses. We will maintain a respectful attitude in which we will not make value judgments. We will start from the coincidences to build the identity of the group.
13. Appropriation for digital PLCs	In this case, the adaptation is absolute, as the proposed dynamics are intended for the management and development of the PLC in an online format. The goal is specifically to provide online strategies that complement those that can be carried out in presence.
14. References & suggested sources	How to use Google Sites: https://support.google.com/sites/answer/6372878?hl=en Some examples of useful videos: 6 Steps to Building an Intranet Site in Google Workspace (Your Team Will Love This!) Google Sites Embed HACKS You Should Know
15. Appendix following	Appendix 1 - Links and screenshots of an example Site

Appendix 1

Land page: <https://sites.google.com/g.educaand.es/plc-digital-dimension/>



Goal

Integrate digital tools to declutter and dinamize a PLC could offer new possibilities to reach the common objectives at the same time that the members improve their digital competences



Digital tools could enhance digital competencies and engagement among PLC members

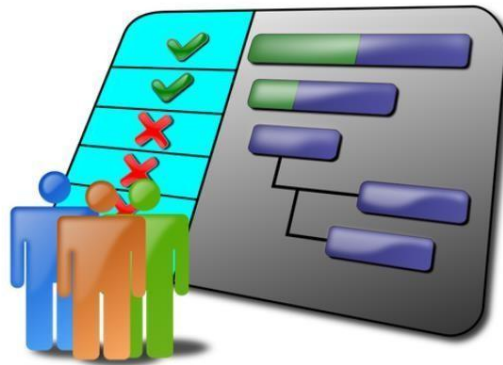
Links: [Link1](#) [Link2](#)

Action Plan: <https://sites.google.com/g.educaand.es/plc-digital-dimension/action-plan>



Embedding diagrams and images

This section could be an example of long-term planification and could contain images, diagrams, or media content to show the different moments along the school year in order to achieve the PLC objectives. Even project manager tools could be embedded and manager by facilitators.



Sandbox: <https://sites.google.com/q.educaand.es/plc-digital-dimension/sandbox>



Text document with the possibility of insert comments or give edit, suggestion or read-only permissions

Slides to show information in a visual way

Google Slides

Spreadsheet : Hoja 1

Tr	Goals	Priority	Leader	Progress	Start date	Deadline	Related files	Tr	Notes
	Goals	P0	Nombre	Delayed	d/mm/yyyy	d/mm/yyyy	Archivo		Notes
	Goals	P1	Nombre	In progress	d/mm/yyyy	d/mm/yyyy	Archivo		Notes
	Goals	P2	Nombre	Done as planned	d/mm/yyyy	d/mm/yyyy	Archivo		Notes
	Goals	P3	Nombre		d/mm/yyyy	d/mm/yyyy	Archivo		Notes
	Goals		Nombre		d/mm/yyyy	d/mm/yyyy	Archivo		Notes
	Goals		Nombre		d/mm/yyyy	d/mm/yyyy	Archivo		Notes
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	Goals		Nombre		d/mm/yyyy	d/mm/yyyy	Archivo		Notes

Links: [Link1](#) [Link2](#)

Events: <https://sites.google.com/q.educaand.es/plc-digital-dimension/events>



Calendar

PLC

Hoy ◀ ▶ noviembre de 2024 ▼ Semana Mes Agenda 🗒

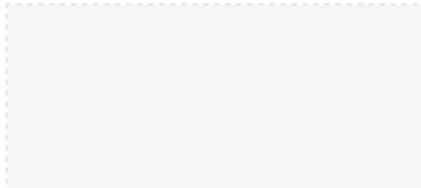
Jun	28	mar	29	mié	30	jue	31	vie	1 de nov	sáb	2	dom	3
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	11		12		13		14		15		16		17
	18		19		20		21		22		23		24
	25		26		27		28		29		30		1 de dic

Los eventos se muestran en la zona horaria: Hora de Europa central - Madrid + GoogleCalendario

Events Calendar



Future Public Events



Leafap

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