Building a Culture of Learning
Topic Study Learning Plan

Initially designed by the Kentucky Department of Education Professional Learning Coordinators during the Spring of 2020 and implemented with educators from across the state, the Building a Culture of Learning topic study was extremely successful so we packaged the plan in a form you can use to facilitate your own group.

This study allows educators an opportunity to dig deeper into how Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) can help build a culture of learning in schools and districts. The goal of the study is to develop a common understanding of:
- the benefits of and the work that defines the PLC process,
- the role of school and district leaders in supporting and implementing PLCs, and
- what it means to be a teacher in an effective PLC.

Throughout this study, we will utilize articles, book excerpts, videos, and other resources from leading educators to gain a better understanding of PLCs and their potential impact on improving student achievement.

Please modify this plan to set a pace and emphasis that is appropriate for your group. Using a Google classroom environment to encourage a space for reflection and group discussion worked well for us, but using notebooks and face-to-face collaboration time may work better for your group.

Building a Culture of Learning Topic Study Learning Plan

Topic	Purpose	Reading Assignment	Reflection Questions	Supporting Resources

The Need for Professional Learning Communities	**Learning Intention:** We are learning about the importance of professional learning communities and their impact on students, teachers and administrators.
	
	Success Criteria:
	● Explain the positive impacts of Professional Learning Communities on
	  ○ students,
	  ○ teachers, and
	  ○ administrators
	
	● Explain what is meant by PLCs being a systems approach to continuous improvement rather than a program to implement.
	
	● Explain how the PLC process challenges the notion of a traditional culture of teacher isolation.
		Anchor Texts:
		Finding Common Ground in Educational Reform Professional Learning Communities Advocates: A Presentation of the Research (compilation of research from Solution Tree)
		
		Professional Learning Communities: The Key to Improved Teaching and Learning (article by Rick DuFour)
		
		Choose 1 Option Below:
		Rick DuFour and the Importance of PLCs (short video by Rick DuFour)
		
		How Professional Learning Communities Benefit Students and Teachers (article by Shirley Hord)
			1. Based on the research, what are the positive impacts of Professional Learning Communities on students, teachers and leaders.
			
			2. What is meant by PLCs being a systems approach to continuous improvement rather than a program to implement?
			
			3. How does the PLC process challenge the notion of a traditional culture of teacher isolation?
				Building a Culture of Learning Video Introduction
				
				Building a Culture of Learning Introduction Slide Presentation
				
				Introduction to Google Classroom Video
				
				Introduction to Google Classroom Slide Presentation
				
				The Need for PLCs Graphic Organizer
				
				The Need for PLCs Reflection Questions
				
				The Power of Collective Efficacy (ASCD article by Donohoo, Hattie, and Eells)
				
				What is "Collective Teacher Efficacy?"(short video from John Hattie)
				
				The Need for PLCs Wrap Up Video
				
				The Need for PLCs Wrap Up Slide Presentation

Clarity in PLCs	**Learning Intention:** We are gaining clarity around the work that defines the PLC process.	**Anchor Text:** The futility of PLC Lite (article by Doug Reeves & Rick DuFour)	1. In your own words, what is meant by "PLC lite?" How does this hinder the work of high-performing PLCs?	Clarity in PLCs Graphic Organizer in Google docs Clarity in PLCs Reflection Questions Google Doc

	Success Criteria: ● Explain common misconceptions when the label of PLC is applied without the commitment to the work of a high-performing PLC. ● Explain how the three big ideas of PLCs help to frame the work of a Professional Learning Community. ● Identify the four questions that drive the collaborative work of a PLC. ● Analyze current level of alignment of PLC implementation in your school or district to the four driving questions that frame the work of a high-performing PLC.	**Choose 1 Option Below:** What is a Professional Learning Community? (ASCD article by Rick Dufour) About PLCs (article from Solution Tree)	2. In what ways do the three big ideas help to frame the work of a high-performing PLC? 3. What are the four questions that drive the collaborative work of a PLC? 4. Based on your current reality, what is the level of alignment between the four questions and the work of PLCs in your district, school, grade-level or content area?	Essential Characteristics: Current Reality Survey (survey from Solution Tree) Current Reality and Steps to Success Planning Chart (Next Steps Resource from Solution Tree) Clarity in PLCs Wrap Up Video Clarity in PLCs Wrap Up Slide Presentation
The Role of Leadership in Building a Culture of Learning	**Learning Intention:** We are learning about the role of leadership in creating a culture of learning that supports the PLC process. **Success Criteria:** ● Identify challenges or potential barriers to creating a culture that supports PLC implementation. ● Explain possible strategies that help create coherence and clarity in the implementation of high-performing PLCs. ● Explain the need for simultaneous loose-tight structure to create a culture that supports high-performing PLCs. ● Analyze potential barriers to	**Anchor Texts:** Creating Coherence and Clarity (excerpt from *Cultures Built to Last*) Leadership in Professional Learning Community (video by Eakers and Mattos) **Choose 1 Option Below:** The Principal's Role in Supporting Learning Communities (ASCD article by Shirley Hord and Stephanie Hirsh) Strategies for Principals to Implement Effective PLCs (Resource from K-12 Blueprint PLC Toolkit)	1. What are some challenges or potential barriers to creating a culture that supports PLC implementation? Based on the current reality of your school or district, what are some challenges or potential barriers to creating a culture of learning? 2. What are some possible strategies that help create coherence and clarity in the implementation of high-performing PLCs? What strategies may be needed to provide greater coherence and clarity for the PLC process in your school or district?	The Role of Leadership in Building a Culture of Learning Graphic Organizer The Role of Leadership in Building a Culture of Learning Reflection Questions Google Doc In Praise of Top Down Leadership (AASA article by Rick DuFour) How Do Principals Really Improve Schools? (ASCD article by Rick DuFour and Mike Mattos) The Role of Leadership Wrap Up Video

			3. Why is there a need for simultaneous loose-tight structure in supporting high performing PLCs? In your school or district, is there clarity in what is tight and what is loose in regards to PLC implementation? If not, what steps may be needed to ensure greater coherence and clarity in PLC implementation?	[The Role of Leadership Wrap Up Slide Presentation](#)
	effective PLC implementation in your school or district, and identify which strategies may be needed to provide greater coherence and clarity in creating a culture of learning.			
Being a Teacher in a High-Performing PLC	**Learning Intention**: We are learning about the role of a teacher in a high-performing PLC. **Success Criteria:** ● Explain what it means to work as a team within a high-performing PLC versus working as a group. ● Explain the fundamental beliefs, values and assumptions that drive how teachers think and behave in a high-performing PLC. ● Analyze your current school or district PLC culture for alignment to the beliefs, values, and assumptions that characterize a high-performing PLC. ● Determine possible next steps for maximizing your potential as a member of a high-performing PLC.	**Anchor Texts:** [Difference Between a Group vs a Team](#) (Video by Rick DuFour) [Looking Inside a Professional Learning Community](#) (Excerpt from *Kid by Kid, Skill by Skill* by Eaker and Keating) **Choose 1 Option Below:** [Learning in a PLC: Student by Student, Target by Target](#) (blog from allthingsplc.info) [Ready to Alter Your Role?](#) (resource from K-12 Blueprint)	1. What does it mean to work as a team within a high-performing PLC versus working as a group? 2. What are the fundamental beliefs,values and assumptions that drive how teachers think and behave in a high-performing PLC? 3. Based on the fundamental beliefs, values and assumptions that characterize high-performing PLCs, what is the level of alignment to your current school or district PLC culture? 4. On a personal level, what steps may be needed to maximize your potential as a member of a high-performing PLC?	[Being a Teacher in a High-Performing PLC Graphic Organizer](#) [Being a Teacher in a High-Performing PLC Reflection Questions Google Doc](#) [PLC at Work: Beware of Seductive Shortcuts on the PLC Journey](#) (webinar with Rebecca DuFour and Rick DuFour) [Critical Issues for Team Consideration](#) (survey from *Learning by Doing*) [Being a Teacher in a High-Performing PLC Wrap Up Video](#) [Being a Teacher in a High-Performing PLC Wrap Up Slide Presentation](#)