

## ANNEX 1

# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES OF TEACHERS

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OCTOBER 2019

### TEACHERS

DO YOU WANT TO COLLABORATE WITH OTHER TEACHERS?

DO YOU WANT TO SHARE EXCITING STRATEGIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN OUR COUNTRY TODAY?

DO YOU WANT TO BE MORE PROFESSIONAL IN YOUR WORK AND IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN EDUCATION?

## THEN JOIN A PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY! OR START ONE IN YOUR AREA!

### WHY A PLC?

A professional learning community, usually just called a 'PLC', is a group of teachers who decide to come together regularly to learn with and from each other on needs they have identified themselves. A PLC offers you an opportunity to discuss the challenges you face and how to deal with them, either with teachers from your own school, or with teachers from other schools.

## WHAT CAN BE DONE IN A PLC?

In a PLC, teachers choose what they want to focus on, and this can change with time. You can develop lesson plans together, share teaching strategies on reading, writing and other topics, develop teaching resources, etc. It does not always have to be subject based. You can also focus on aspects of teaching such as discipline, supporting learners with learning barriers, classroom management techniques, etc.

## WHAT CAN I DO AS A TEACHER TO START A PLC?

You may know of teachers that are interested in sharing and collaborating as professionals. When you have the opportunity, discuss your idea to start a PLC with other teachers. These could be teachers from your own school and/or teachers from other schools. You can invite interested teachers to a first session, either directly or through your district officials. Secure the venue for your first session, for example with the leadership of the school.



## FACILITATING A PLC

Facilitating a PLC entails a variety of tasks. Combining these tasks is a balancing act and it is important that you find the mix that works for your PLC and in your context.

### COORDINATING:

The logistics of bringing people together; planning and structuring the PLC sessions.

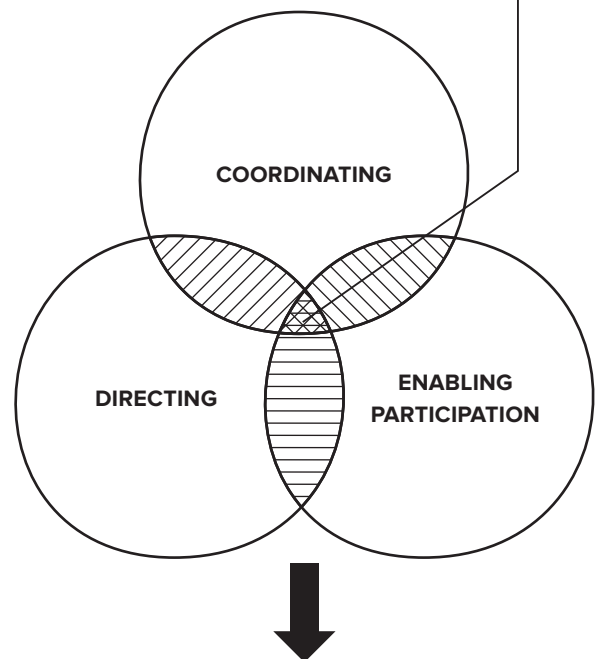
### DIRECTING:

keeping the group focused and disciplined; ensuring orderly proceedings. Holding all members accountable for progress in their learning.

### ENABLING PARTICIPATION:

motivate teachers to join the PLC; ensuring everyone has voice and shares challenges, insights and good practices. Building professional and collaborative learning. Stimulating group- and self-reflection. Soliciting support from leadership and relevant experts.

**BALANCING ACT!**  
FINDING THE MIX THAT WORKS FOR YOU.

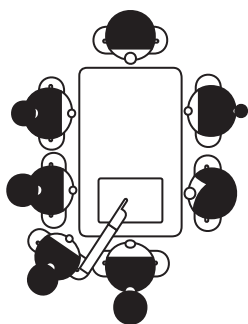


**COLLABORATIVE LEARNING  
IN A PLC**

**IMPROVING THE LEARNING  
OF ALL LEARNERS**

## THE FIRST PLC SESSION

1. At your first session you can explain:
  - a. The concept of a PLC. You can emphasise that a PLC is a professional development approach that is recognised and encouraged by the department and by SACE. Participation is voluntary.
  - b. That teachers can earn CPTD points by participating in PLC sessions. The provincial coordinator of SACE can assist you with more information.
  - c. That teachers in the PLC choose what topics they want to discuss depending on their own needs;
  - d. Different activities that can be done in a PLC, e.g. sharing teaching strategies for different types of lessons, preparing lesson plans, error analysis, preparing and sharing teaching resources, inviting experts for input on different topics, etc.
2. As a group, agree on the focus of the PLC. You can brainstorm and decide on some topics that you will deal with in the first sessions.
3. Decide how often you will meet and where. Venues can be rotated. Draw up a schedule for your sessions. Decide on the dates for at least a term.
4. Discuss roles and choose a coordinator and / or facilitator. These roles can rotate among members.
5. Keep in mind that engagement is usually optimal when your PLC has between 5 and 15 members.



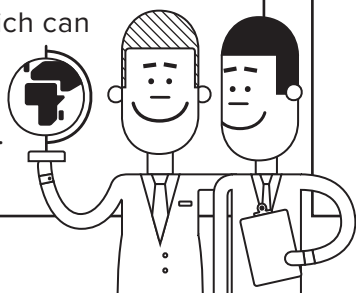
**HAVE YOUR FIRST SESSION,  
AND YOU ARE SET TO HAVE  
YOUR OWN PLC!**

## WHAT DOES POLICY SAY ABOUT PLCS?

The Department of Basic Education describes PLCs as an effective way of doing professional development. The policy of the Department is based on the Integrated Strategic Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED 2011-2025). The policy sees PLCs as a way for teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development with the support of school leadership and district officials.

### SACE CPTD POINTS

SACE requires that educators participate in Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). Participating in a PLC will earn you CPTD points which can be recorded in the SACE CPTD Management System.



### ADMINISTRATION OF YOUR PLC

- a. Keep a record of attendance through a register that is signed at every session.
- b. These registers must eventually be given to the manager of your District Teacher Development Centre (DTDC).
- c. Each member should keep a file of the materials and resources shared in the sessions of the PLC. These records can be used when logging activities in the SACE CPTD system.

# DO YOU NEED MORE ASSISTANCE?



You can scan this QR code with your device to read the DBE guideline: Professional Learning Communities: A guideline for South African Schools.



You can scan this QR code to view video clips on PLCs, based on the experiences of South African educators.

## GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PLC!

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