

Professional Learning Community Continuum Rubric

	PLC Tenets	School's Implementation Level			
		Pre-initiation <i>School has not yet begun to address the tenet</i>	Initiation <i>The effort has not yet begun to impact a "critical mass" of staff</i>	Developing <i>Staff has begun to align their thinking, practices, and structures with the tenet</i>	Sustaining <i>The tenet is deeply embedded in the school culture. It serves as the driving force of the work. It is so internalized that it can survive changes in key personnel.</i>
		<p>Shared mission and a school-wide focus on learning</p> <p><i>Is it evident that learning for ALL is our core purpose?</i></p> <p><i>"Keeping the main thing the main thing"</i></p>	<p>No effort has been made to engage faculty in identifying what they want students to learn, or how they will respond if students don't learn.</p>	<p>Teachers use learning outcomes identified in POS; teams of teachers have not agreed on essential and important knowledge. Responding to students who are not learning is left to the discretion of individual teachers.</p>	<p>Teachers are clear regarding the learning outcomes their students are to achieve. They have developed strategies to assess student mastery of these outcomes, they monitor results, and they attempt to respond to students who are not learning.</p>
<p>Shared vision</p> <p><i>Has the school identified what they are trying to create?</i></p>	<p>No effort has been made to engage faculty in describing preferred conditions for their school (i.e., their "ideal school")</p>	<p>A vision statement has been developed for the school, but most staff are unaware of, or unaffected by it.</p>	<p>Staff members have worked together to describe the school they are trying to create. They have endorsed this general description and feel a sense of ownership in it. School improvement planning and staff development initiatives are tied to the shared vision.</p>	<p>Staff members routinely articulate the major principles of the shared vision and use those principles to guide their day-to-day efforts and decisions. They honestly assess the current reality in their school and continually seek effective strategies for reducing the discrepancies between the conditions described in their vision and their current reality.</p>	
<p>Shared values</p> <p><i>How must we behave to advance our vision?</i></p>	<p>Staff members have not yet articulated the attitudes, behaviors, or commitments they are prepared to demonstrate in order to advance the mission of learning for ALL and the vision of what the school might become. Discussions focus on what <u>other</u> groups must do to help them.</p>	<p>Staff members have articulated statements of belief or philosophy for their school; however, these value statements have not yet impacted their day-to-day work or the operation of the school.</p>	<p>Staff members have made a conscious effort to articulate and promote the attitudes, behaviors, and commitments that will advance their vision of their school. People are confronted when they behave in ways that are inconsistent with the core values.</p>	<p>The values of the school are embedded in the school culture. These shared values are evident to new staff and to those outside of the school. They influence policies, procedures, and daily practices of the school as well as day-to-day decisions of individual staff members.</p>	

	<p>Shared goals</p> <p><i>What are our priorities?</i></p>	<p>No effort has been made to engage the staff in setting and defining school improvement goals related to student learning. If goals exist, they have been developed by the school administration or central office staff.</p>	<p>Staff members have participated in a process to establish goals, but the goals are typically stated as projects to be accomplished, or are written so broadly that they are impossible to measure. The goals do not yet influence instructional decisions in a meaningful way.</p>	<p>Staff members have worked together to establish long- and short-term improvement goals for their school. The goals are clearly communicated. Assessment tools and strategies have been developed and implemented to measure progress toward the goals.</p>	<p>All staff pursue measurable performance goals as part of their routine responsibilities. Goal attainment is celebrated and staff members demonstrate willingness to identify and pursue challenging stretch goals.</p>
	<p>Curriculum focus and reduction</p>	<p>Each teacher independently decides what to teach.</p>	<p>Teacher uses local, state, and national curriculum standards to decide what to teach. Curriculum overload and coverage is common.</p>	<p>Teams of teachers work with local, state and national standards to decide what to teach. Pacing guides are developed collectively.</p>	<p>Teams of teachers collaboratively agree upon curriculum focus and on what students are expected to learn. Content is reduced to more meaningful (essential and important) content taught at greater depth.</p>
	<p><u>Collaborative culture:</u> Teacher collaboration and collective inquiry</p>	<p>Teachers work in isolation.</p>	<p>Teachers recognize a common curriculum that they are responsible for teaching, but there is little exchange of ideas regarding instructional materials, teaching strategies, or methods of assessment.</p>	<p>Teachers function in work groups that meet periodically to complete certain tasks such as reviewing intended outcomes and coordinating calendars.</p>	<p>Teachers function as a team. They work collaboratively to identify collective goals, develop strategies to achieve those goals, gather relevant data, and learn from one another. Unlike a work group, they are characterized by common goals and interdependent efforts to achieve those goals.</p>
	<p><u>Collaborative culture:</u> Principals as leaders of teacher leaders</p>	<p>Questions of power are a continuing source of controversy and friction.</p>	<p>Efforts have been made to reduce friction by clarifying “management rights” and “teacher rights.” Both parties are protective of intrusion onto their turf.</p>	<p>Administrators solicit and value teacher input as improvement initiatives are developed and considered, but administrators are regarded as having primary responsibility for school improvement.</p>	<p>Staff are fully involved in the decision-making at the school. Administrators pose questions, delegate authority, create collaborative decision-making processes, and provide staff with the information, training, and parameters they need to make good decisions. School improvement is viewed as a collective responsibility. Teachers serve as transformational leaders.</p>
	<p>Common assessments, both formative and summative</p>	<p>Each teacher independently decides how to assess learning. Student learning is documented as average achievement over time. Teachers have little awareness of what or how colleagues are assessing student learning.</p>	<p>Individual teachers design assessments. Student learning is documented as average achievement over time. Teachers compare school assessment data with their own students’ data to determine the relative success of their students.</p>	<p>Teams of teachers design common assessments to monitor student performance. Results may be shared and analyzed collectively. Student learning is documented as average achievement over time.</p>	<p>Assessments are designed by teams of teachers, and the data is analyzed collectively to inform their teaching. Students use the data as information about their progress toward learning goals and as a way to document their content and skill mastery. Assessment practices serve to motivate students by giving them multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning. Student learning is documented as it is achieved.</p>

	<p>Continuous improvement along with on-going data collection, analysis and reflection</p> <p><i>What does the data reveal?</i></p>	<p>Little attention is devoted to creating systems that enable either the school or individual teachers to track improvement. The school has a difficult time answering the question, “Are we becoming more effective in achieving our shared vision?”</p>	<p>A few people in the school are tracking general indicators of achievement, such as mean scores on state and national tests. Positive trends are celebrated. Negative trends are dismissed or suppressed.</p>	<p>Individual teachers and teaching teams gather information to identify and monitor individual and team goals.</p>	<p>Everyone in the school participates in an ongoing cycle of systematic gathering and analysis of data to identify discrepancies between actual and desired results, goal setting to reduce the discrepancies, developing strategies to achieve the goals, and tracking improvement indicators.</p>
	<p>Focus on results</p>	<p>Desired results for each student have not been identified.</p>	<p>Desired results are identified, but are stated in such broad terms that can not be measured. Improvement initiatives focus on inputs – projects and tasks to be completed – rather than on student achievements.</p>	<p>Desired results are identified in terms of student outcomes. Student achievement indicators have been identified. Data are being collected and monitored within the school or district. Results are shared with teachers.</p>	<p>Teams of teachers are “hungry” for information on results. They gather relevant data and use it to identify improvement goals and to monitor progress toward goals.</p>
	<p>Action research</p>	<p>While individual teachers may try experiments in their own classrooms, no structures to support, assess, or share their findings are in place. Many staff members have no knowledge of or involvement in action research.</p>	<p>Some staff members participate in pilot action projects. The sharing of findings is largely informal.</p>	<p>Staff members have been trained in action research methods and conduct action research to improve their professional practice. Findings generated by this research are beginning to influence classroom practices.</p>	<p>Topics for action research arise from the shared vision and goals of the school. Staff members regard action research as an important component of their professional responsibilities. There are frequent discussions regarding the implications of findings as teachers attempt to learn from the research of their colleagues.</p>
	<p>Research-based best practices</p>	<p>Decisions about improvement strategies are made by “averaging opinions” or are externally mandated. Emphasis is placed on how teachers like various approaches.</p>	<p>Teachers rely on others outside the school to identify improvement strategies and to supply additional resources for implementation. The effectiveness of improvement strategies are externally validated.</p>	<p>Teachers collaborative to set goals around prescribed improvement strategies. Individual teachers and teaching teams gather information to identify and monitor individual and team goals.</p>	<p>Decisions about improvement strategies are made by teams of teachers combing the research to identify best practices to affect student learning goals. Approaches are internally validated. Teams of teachers try various approaches and collaborate on how the approaches affect student learning. The effect on student learning is the primary basis for assessing various improvement strategies.</p>
	<p>Systematic, direct, & timely intervention and enrichment strategies</p> <p><i>What will we do when students don't learn?</i> <i>What will we do when students have already learned?</i></p>	<p>Remediation is offered when students fail to learn.</p>	<p>Individual teachers have the discretion to invite students to participate in enrichment and intervention sessions that are offered periodically.</p>	<p>Teachers collaboratively plan interventions for students who are not learning. Additional time and support is offered regularly outside of the school day.</p>	<p>Intervention and enrichment time is embedded in the daily schedule of the school day. Students are required to be involved when they are experiencing difficulty learning. Structures are in place to support teachers efforts in providing additional time and support.</p>

	<p>Schools plan, with a few important SMART goals</p> <p><i>Strategic, Measurable, Attainable, Results-based, Time-bound</i></p>	<p>School improvement plan focuses on a wide variety of things. The plan is often completed to meet a mandate and then ignored.</p>	<p>School improvement plan focuses on mandated areas of improvement. Areas of instructional focus and indicators of achievement are weakly defined.</p>	<p>School improvement plan focuses on areas of improvement and learning goals identified by the school. Teachers collaborate to identify areas of focus based on prior data.</p>	<p>School improvement plan focus on a few important goals that, with sustained and organized effort, will improve student learning. Impact of the plan is meaningful and measurable.</p>
	<p>Celebration</p>	<p>Celebrations and recognition are rather infrequent and often focus on things other than the central mission of the school.</p>	<p>Celebrations and recognition occur periodically and focus on a variety of school activities.</p>	<p>Examples of the core values at work are shared in stories and celebrations regularly. Group recognition is the norm.</p>	<p>Celebration is frequent, tied directly to the school's mission, vision, and values. It recognizes the accomplishments of individuals as well as groups. Recognition is given for improvements in pursuit of, as well as, accomplishments of learning goals.</p>
	<p>Persistence in a nonlinear process</p>	<p>Improvement efforts frequently shift as new trends and ideas come along.</p>	<p>Schools take their lead from outside the school for direction and resources. Some staff view the re-culturing of their school as an event or a mandate rather than a sustained effort requiring their on-going commitment and involvement.</p>	<p>School staff begins to “look in the mirror” for school improvement initiatives. Some staff step forward to lead and promote collaborative decision making regarding teaching and learning, even though they may have resistance from colleagues.</p>	<p>The school is committed to “staying the course” in the attainment of the school vision. New initiatives are only implemented if it is determined that the change will help the school achieve its vision for the future. The leaders promote, protect and defend the school's vision and values and confront behavior that is incongruent with the school's mission, vision and values. Teachers and students have a sense of self-efficacy.</p>
	<p>Parent partnerships</p>	<p>There is little or no effort made to cultivate a partnership with parents. Parents are either ignored or viewed as adversaries.</p>	<p>An effort is made to keep parents informed of events and situations at school in order to secure parental support for the school's efforts.</p>	<p>Structures and processes for two-way communications with parents are developed. The parental perspective is solicited on both school-wide issues and matters related directly to their own children.</p>	<p>The school-parent partnership moves beyond open communication. The school provides parents with information and materials that enable parents to assist their children in learning. Parents are welcomed in the school. There is an active volunteer program. Parents are full partners in the educational decisions that affect their children. Community resources are used to strengthen the school and student learning.</p>

Adapted from Dr. Rick DuFour's “The Professional Learning Community Continuum Rubric”