Global PD teams
Collaborative Learning for School Improvement

Collaborative Teams
in Professional Learning Communities at Work®

Solution Tree

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Reproducibles are in italics.

Notes to the Facilitator

The purpose of this workshop is to help educators explore the concept of collaborative teams in professional learning communities (PLCs). It is based on the work of Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Thomas Many, and Mike Mattos. In this workshop, participants learn from their counterparts in other schools. The workshop is designed to be used with the Global PD Teams Library —a site containing hundreds of professional development videos, books, study guides, and worksheets. The workshop contains pre-work for participants to complete prior to the workshop and post-work, which participants can complete with the help of Solution Tree virtual coaches—coaches available via webinar. The workshop follows an interactive format that includes group viewing of video components from experts, suggested discussion prompts, and group activities. Facilitators can use discussion prompts to start and guide group discussions.

This workshop is divided into eleven components.

1. **Welcome and Opening**

2. **Distinguish Between the Characteristics of a PLC and Traditional School:** This component introduces the three big ideas of professional learning communities—a focus on learning, a culture of collaboration, and a focus on results.

3. **Build a Culture of Collaboration:** This component highlights the culture of collaboration and explores the meaning of the term *collaborative team* in a PLC.

4. **Embed Collaboration:** Improved student achievement results from collective action. How do schools move from a culture of isolation to one of collaboration? This component focuses on the first step involved in creating a culture of collaboration—embedding collaboration into the routine practices of a school.

5. **Create Time to Collaborate:** A second step in creating a culture of collaboration is for teams to have protected time to collaborate.

6. **Focus on Learning Questions:** A third step in creating a culture of collaboration is for teams to focus on four critical questions—What do we want our students to learn? How will we know if each student has learned? How will we respond when some students do not learn? How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

7. **Generate Products:** A fourth step in creating a culture of collaboration is for teams to generate products related to adult and student learning.

8. **Establish Norms:** A fifth step involved in creating a culture of collaboration is for teams to explicitly generate norms—one of the most important steps that can move a group to a team.

9. **Use SMART Goals:** A sixth step in developing a culture of collaboration is for the team to create SMART goals—a group without a goal is not a team.

10. **Provide Relevant Information:** Finally, in developing a culture of collaboration, leaders must provide teams with information about best practice.

11. **Conclusions:** In the last component of the video, participants will hear insights about collaborative teamwork from PLC practitioners.

Conducting the Workshop

This workshop is designed to last about eight hours. It can be scheduled for a single day or be scheduled over two days. This package includes all the professional development materials you need to conduct this workshop—facilitator's guide with detailed teaching suggestions, transparency masters, and participant handouts, as well as the video resources.

To conduct a successful learning event, please consider the following issues.

- **Preparation:** Please view the entire video program, read all materials, and complete all activities yourself before leading the workshop.

- **Location:** The workshop should take place in an area that is large enough for individual, small-team, and whole-group work.

- **Equipment:** You will need a projector, speakers that are able to project to all participants, and a computer with Internet connectivity and software capable of presenting Microsoft PowerPoint files.

- **Masters:** This guide includes reproducible masters. Duplicate the handouts before the workshop begins, and distribute them to participants according to the workshop instructions. A master for the overhead transparency is also included in this guide. Duplicate these before the workshop begins, or you may project the page from your computer onto the screen.

- **Global PD Teams and playlists:** Each participant will need a license to the Global PD Teams Library. As part of your purchase of this library, Solution Tree will load playlists that contain all of the videos and worksheets necessary for this workshop. You will need to share these playlists with each participant of the workshop ahead of time.

- **Meeting setup:** We recommend that teachers be placed in tables containing no more than five people. If possible, these tables should be segregated by grade level or course area.

- **Pre-work printouts:** This workshop uses a *flipped classroom approach*, where participants are asked to view and comment on a short video ahead of time. You will need to log into your Global PD Teams account prior to the event to print out teachers' comments. These comment sheets should be posted on flip charts or the walls around the room. These comments will be part of an activity in the Welcome and Opening.

- **Additional equipment:** You will also need flip charts, chalkboards, or whiteboards with appropriate writing materials to conduct the workshop.

- **Discussion prompts:** Use these to start and guide interactive discussions with your participants as you move through content.

- **Refreshments:** The agenda for the three-and-a-half-hour workshop should include one or more breaks with beverages. Snacks are optional, but water should be available throughout the workshop.

Workshop Overview at a Glance

Time (in minutes)	Component	Masters and Handouts
10–20	Welcome and Opening	
20–25	Distinguish Between the Characteristics of a PLC and Traditional School	"Venn Diagram"
10–15	Build a Culture of Collaboration	"Seven Steps to Building High-Performing Teams"
30–40	Embed Collaboration	"Collaborative Team Definition" "Team Structures"
20–30	Create Time to Collaborate	"Making Time for Collaboration" "Parameters for Creating Time for Collaboration"
30–40	Focus on Learning Questions	"Four Critical Questions of a PLC"
15–20	Generate Products	
25–45	Establish Norms	"Collective Commitments"
30–50	Use SMART Goals	"Third-Grade SMART Goal" " "Eighth-Grade SMART Goal American" "Government SMART Goal" "SMART Goal Worksheet"
20	Provide Relevant Information	"Ongoing Learning"
10–20	Conclusions	"Critical Issues for Team Consideration"

Workshop Teaching Suggestions

The purpose of this workshop is to help educators explore the concept of collaborative teams in professional learning communities. Special attention is given to a seven-step procedure for helping teachers move from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration.

Learning Objectives

After viewing the videos and participating in the activities for the workshop, participants will be able to:

- Distinguish between the characteristics of a PLC and traditional school
- Describe seven steps for moving teachers to a culture of collaboration
- Define collaborative team
- Analyze teams to determine whether they are operating collaboratively
- Identify team structures for ensuring meaningful collaboration
- List strategies for providing teams with time to collaborate
- Describe the four critical questions of a PLC
- Analyze teams in terms of critical questions they use
- Identify team products that flow directly from critical questions about learning
- State the role of norms in the functioning of teams
- Deduce the norms teams use
- Explain the role of SMART goals in teamwork
- Articulate the importance of ongoing learning in the growth of a school

Program Overview

The video playlist for this workshop focuses on the core tenet of PLCs—a culture of collaboration. It explores seven steps that Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, and Robert Eaker (2008) identify in *Revisiting Professional Learning Communities at Work* that school leaders must implement to help teachers move from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration. Educators, including the Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, and Robert Eaker, discuss the purpose of collaboration in a professional learning community and how teams use it to ensure student learning. They systematically explain strategies for structuring, scheduling, monitoring, and growing collaborative teams. Footage of real teams at work illustrates the issues teams address and how they interact. *Learning by Doing* coauthors and educational consultants Thomas Many and Mike Mattos are also featured in the program.

Materials

This workshop is designed to work with the Global PD Teams Library and a playlist—a curated list of videos—designed specifically for this workshop. This playlist will be loaded into your Global PD Teams account.

- **Reproducible masters:**
  - ‣ "Venn Diagram"
  - ‣ "Collaborative Team Definition"
  - ‣ "Team Structures"
  - ‣ "Making Time for Collaboration"
  - ‣ "Parameters for Creating Time for Collaboration"
  - ‣ "Collective Commitments"
- **Reproducible handouts:**
  - ‣ "Seven Steps to Building High-Performing Teams"
  - ‣ "Four Critical Questions of a PLC"
  - ‣ "Third-Grade SMART Goal"
  - ‣ "Eighth-Grade SMART Goal"
  - ‣ "American Government SMART Goal"
  - ‣ "SMART Goal Worksheet"
  - ‣ "Ongoing Learning"
  - ‣ "Critical Issues for Team Consideration"
- Flip charts, chalkboards, or whiteboards with appropriate writing materials

Pre-Work

At least two weeks before your session, share the PLC Collaborative Teams playlist (already loaded in your Global PD Teams account) with each participant to view prior to the meeting. Under each video in Global PD Teams is an area in which teachers can enter their comments. Request that all teachers watch the videos and write a very brief reflection in the comments section. Suggested email copy is as follows.

> You will be receiving an invitation from me to add a playlist to your Global PD Teams ac-counts. Please accept the playlist. The playlist contains a video (that is approximately ten minutes) that I would like for you to review prior to our professional develop-ment session on [DATE]. After you've viewed the video, please add a brief (one- to three-sentence) reflection on the topic. Specifically, identify the distinctions Rebecca DuFour makes in the video between traditional and PLC schools. We will read and discuss these reflections during our professional development session.

Pre-Work Playlist

The playlist contains the following video.

The Foundation of a PLC

In this video, Rebecca DuFour answers the question "What is a PLC?" We learn how PLCs are not a one-time event, program, book study, or a workshop but instead are an ongoing process. We learn that the foundation of a PLC is collectively establishing the mission, vision, values, and goals. We also learn that the PLC process is like a lifestyle change for the team, school, or district that must be maintained forever.

Welcome and Opening

1. Welcome participants to the workshop, and introduce yourself and anyone else serving as a workshop host, co-leader, or an organizer.

2. If participants do not know one another well, conduct a get to know you activity. Ask participants to form pairs and interview each other for about five minutes. Then ask the pairs to introduce each other to the group, stating the person's name, something interesting or different about the person, and what the person hopes to gain from the workshop. (If there are more than twenty people in the group, have each pair join another pair and only make introductions within each group of four.)

3. Ask all participants to read the comments that their peers entered in Global PD Teams for the pre-work (posted around the room). Ask each participant to place a sticky note next to the five comments they would like to discuss most.

Distinguish Between the Characteristics of a PLC and Traditional School

1. Project the "Venn Diagram" master (page 18) on a screen, board, or wall. The facilitator should tally the sticky notes to find the top-five comments. Read them aloud, and ask the group to help you place them somewhere on the Venn diagram.

2. Have each participant develop a definition of a PLC school based on the information entered on the Venn diagram.

   Encourage a few participants to share their definitions with the group.

Build a Culture of Collaboration

This component highlights the culture of collaboration and explores the meaning of the term *collaborative team* in a PLC.

Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Embedding Collaboration

Present the *Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Embedding Collaboration* video, which is the second in the PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, Rebecca DuFour discusses embedded collaboration and, specifically, the different forms of effective collaborative team structures.

Discussion Prompts

1. Indicate that as their definitions of a PLC suggested, collaboration among educators is central to the functioning of the school and that there are seven steps that schools can take to move teachers from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration.

2. State that the workshop will focus on exploring these seven steps, using real PLCs as illustrations.

   Distribute a copy of the "Seven Steps to Building High-Performing Teams" handout (page 26) to each participant to serve as a guide for watching the video. Remind them to use their handout to make notes throughout the workshop

Embed Collaboration

This component focuses on the first step involved in creating a culture of collaboration—embedding collaboration into the routine practices of a school.

1. Begin by projecting the "Collaborative Team Definition" master (page 19) on a screen, board, or wall.

   Ask participants to suggest examples of various kinds of teams, both in schools and elsewhere.

2. Write their responses on a chart or board. As a group, review the elements of the collaborative team definition identified on the overhead.

3. Then have participants identify which of the listed teams are actually collaborative teams according to the definition presented.

4. Ask participants to keep the definition of collaborative teams in mind as they watch the team case studies that appear in the video program.

Embedding Collaboration Into Routine School Practices

Present the *Embedding Collaboration Into Routine School Practices* video, which is third in the PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, Richard DuFour and Robert Eaker define collaborative teams as a group of people who work interdependently to affect student learning and take collective responsibility for the outcomes. We learn that there are multiple ways to structure teams and that we should strive to create teams comprised of teachers who share common students and outcomes.

Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Embed Collaboration

Present the *Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Embed Collaboration* video, which is fourth in the PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video a high school world history collaborative team discusses and demonstrates the importance of embedding collaboration in every aspect of teaching and learning. Members discuss their various perspectives on the questions that will be included in a quarter exam.

Discussion Prompt

1. After participants have viewed the component, ask them what interested them in the classroom case study.

2. Ask them how Robert Eaker's definition of a team in the component compares to their definition of a collaborative team.

   Note: You might want to show Eaker's portion of the video component and project the "Collaborative Team Definition" master again. Ask why or why not they consider the team in the video to be a collaborative team.

Activity

1. Project the "Team Structures" master (page 20) on a screen, board, or wall.

2. Review the structures as a group.

3. Then ask for volunteers to answer the query that the narrator poses in the video "As you watch this PLC team, try to identify the team structure it represents."

4. Ask for volunteers to share their responses with the group.

5. State that the teachers in the team in the video all taught the same course—world history—the teachers make up a horizontal team.

   Then, ask participants to work in pairs to decide how they would structure teams in their school, using the "Team Structures" master as a guide. Have them develop a rationale for their decision. Remind them of the component with Mike Mattos's rationale for structuring teams in his building: "We try to structure it so you have meeting times with people who have common outcomes and common students."

Note: You might want to play Mattos's portion of this video component again as participants work. Ask for volunteers to share their team structures and rationales with the group.

Create Time to Collaborate

This component focuses on finding time to collaborate.

Creating Time to Collaborate

Present the *Creating Time to Collaborate* video, which is the fifth in PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, Rebecca DuFour, Tom Many, and Mike Mattos stress the need to build protected time to collaborate with teams at least once a week. We learn multiple strategies to create time for collaboration, but the simplest and easiest method is to provide common prep time for teachers in the same collaborative team (by grade level, by discipline, and so on).

Activity

1. Encourage participants to sketch a diagram of the banking time strategy Mike Mattos used in his school to find protected time for teacher collaboration.

2. After they have watched the component, ask for a volunteer to describe Mattos's banking time strategy, using his or her sketch to illustrate.

   Encourage participants to share their responses to the strategy Mattos used and anything else they would like to say about the video component.

3. Project the "Making Time for Collaboration" master (page 21) on a screen, board, or wall.

   Review each strategy as a group.

   Then ask participants to work in pairs to speculate about the barriers they might encounter in implementing each of these strategies in their schools, and how they might overcome these barriers.

   Ask for pairs to volunteer to share their thinking with the group.

4. Project the "Parameters for Creating Time for Collaboration" master (page 23) on a screen, board, or wall.

5. Ask participants to brainstorm other strategies for creating protected time for teachers to collaborate in their schools. Use the parameters on the overhead as a guide. Record their responses on a chart or board.

6. Ask each individual to reflect on whether any of the strategies suggested would work in his or her school.

Focus on Learning Questions

This component focuses on the four critical questions of a PLC.

Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Focus on Critical Questions

Present the *Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Focus on Critical Questions* video, which is the sixth in PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

The third key in an effective team is always to focus on the critical questions of a PLC. In this video, Richard DuFour discusses the importance of focusing teams on the four critical questions of a PLC. DuFour also discusses the eighteen critical issues for team consideration.

Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Focus on Learning Questions

Present the *Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Focus on Learning Questions* video, which is the seventh in PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, a collaborative third-grade collaborative team discusses and demonstrates keeping a focus on learning. The topic of discussion is a common assessment and rubric—specifically, how the team agrees on the criteria for grading the assessment.

1. Emphasize to participants that the fact that teachers simply collaborate does nothing to improve schools. They must be collaborating about the right things; that is to say, collaborating about four critical questions.

2. Distribute a copy of the "Four Critical Questions of a PLC" handout (page 27) to each participant. Indicate that these are the questions that collaborative teams should address in their collaborative efforts.

3. After they have viewed the component, ask participants what interested them in the classroom case study. Have them consider the team's organization and why or why not they consider the team to be a collaborative team, according to the previous definition.

4. Then ask for volunteers to answer the query that the narrator poses about the case study: "Here is another collaborative team at work. See if you can identify which fundamental question or questions are being discussed."

   Have them share their responses.

Note: All of the extended school case studies presented in this video focus on one or more of the four critical questions.

1. Remind participants that at the end of the component, the narrator states, "Collaborative time can be wasted if educators don't use that time to focus clearly on teaching and learning issues."

2. Ask participants how they think a school leader can guide a team to focus on teaching and learning issues.

3. List their responses on a chart or board.

4. Discuss the results as a group.

Generate Products

This component focuses on generating products related to adult and student learning.

Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Team Products

Present the *Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Team Products* video, which is the eighth in PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, Richard DuFour cautions against school leaders being overly involved in teamwork. To monitor the effectiveness of teams, he recommends requiring those teams to create meaningful products

of their work. He builds on this concept by recommending a schedule by which collaborative teams should turn over specific products of teamwork.

Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Generate Products

Present the video *An Inside Look as Teacher Teams Review Assessment Data*, which is the seventh in PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, a collaborative team discusses and demonstrates the importance of reviewing products that flow from critical questions about learning. Team members discuss a common assessment and a specific pattern in student misunderstanding. As a result of this conversation, the team decides to change the nature of the common assessment and its collective approach to teaching a concept.

Discussion Prompt

1. After they have viewed the component, ask participants what interested them in the classroom case study.

2. Have them consider the team's organization and which of the four critical questions the case study addressed.

3. Ask whether they consider the team in the video to be a collaborative team. Ask why or why not.
4. Then ask for volunteers to answer the query that the narrator poses about the case study:

   "Watch this PLC team at work and identify some of the products they create related to learning."

   Ask which learning question was behind the main product the team was working on.

Activity

1. Ask individual participants to generate a list of products that they would want teams in their school to generate and place the list, which flowed directly from critical questions about learning, into a notebook.

2. Record these on a chart or board.

3. To evaluate the list of products generated, have participants work in pairs to try to tie each product listed to one or more of the critical questions about learning.

4. Ask for pairs to volunteer to share their findings with the group.

Establish Norms

This component is about generating team norms.

Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Establishing Norms

Present the *Seven Keys to Effective Teams: Establishing Norms* video, which is the eighth in the PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, Richard and Rebecca DuFour roleplay as members of a leadership team to establish and roll out the team norms.

Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Establishing Norms

Present the *Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Establishing Norms* video, which is the ninth in the PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, a collaborative team discusses and demonstrates the importance of establishing and following norms during team meetings. Specifically, the team reviews student products—a common assessment—and follows a standard agenda to discuss the results, areas where students are struggling, and sharing of ideas to improve learning.

Discussion Prompt

1. After participants have viewed the videos, ask them what interested them in the classroom case study.

2. Have them consider the team's organization and which of the four critical questions the case study addressed.

3. Ask whether they consider the team in the video to be a collaborative team. Ask why or why not.

Activity

1. Remind participants of the teacher Amy Adams's statement at the end of the component: "Our norms . . . make it a safe environment to share our data, to share our ideas. We honor everyone's thinking and what everyone has to bring to the table."

2. Have participants work in pairs to generate explicit norms they would like to see teams in their schools adopt that help clarify expectations, promote open dialogue, and serve as a powerful tool for holding members accountable.

3. Ask for pairs to volunteer to share their thinking with the group.

   Record their responses on a chart or board.

4. Finally, ask participants to brainstorm responses to the following question: "If you were forming a new team, what resources and research might help your team create team norms?"

   Record their responses on a chart or board.

Use SMART Goals

This component focuses on creating SMART goals within collaborative teams. Ask participants to think of a definition of *SMART goals* as they watch the following video.

Examining SMART Goals

Present the *Examining SMART Goals* video, which is the twelfth in PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams. As they watch, encourage participants to answer the query that the narrator poses.

In this video, a collaborative leadership team discusses and demonstrates establishing schoolwide SMART goals. Mike Mattos explains the importance of performing a comprehensive review of assessment data from previous years to determine areas of focus. He also explains that teams must investigate research-based tools to help teams accomplish the SMART goals.

Discussion Prompts

1. After they have viewed the component, ask participants what interested them in the classroom case study.

2. Have them consider the team's organization and which of the four critical questions the case study addressed.

3. Ask whether they consider the team in the video to be a collaborative team. Ask why or why not.

4. Have them identify and use specific examples of norms used to guide behavior in the team.

5. Ask participants what they think of when they hear the term SMART goal. (A SMART goal is strategic and specific, measurable, attainable, results based, and time bound.)

   Then, ask for volunteers to answer the query that the narrator poses about the case study: "As you watch this PLC team at work, identify the action plan steps they are developing to achieve their SMART goal."

Activity

1. Have participants form pairs. Distribute copies of the completed "SMART Goal Worksheet" handouts (pages 28–33) and the blank "SMART Goal Worksheet" handout (page 34) to each participant.

2. Indicate that the worksheets provide examples and a format showing how school goals might be translated into SMART goals for collaborative teams.

3. Ask each pair to carefully examine one of the completed worksheets and then use the blank "SMART Goal Worksheet" to translate a school goal of its choosing into a SMART goal for a particular grade or course.

4. Circulate among participants to monitor their work and offer encouragement and advice.

5. When the pairs have completed the task, ask for volunteers to share their work with the group.

6. Remind participants that in this video, Richard DuFour states that "a group without a goal is not a team."

   Ask them what they think he meant by that comment and ask whether they agree or disagree. Ask why or why not. Have participants share their responses as a group.

Provide Relevant Information

This component focuses on best practices.

Collaborative Teams in a PLC: Provide Relevant Information

Present the *Continuous PD in a PLC* video, which is the thirteenth in PLC Collaborative Teams playlist within Global PD Teams.

In this video, a collaborative team discusses and demonstrates sharing teaching strategies and con-cepts with other team members

Discussion Prompt

1. After they have viewed the component, ask participants what interested them in the classroom case study.

2. Have them consider the team's organization and which of the four critical questions the case study addressed.

3. Ask whether they consider the team in the video to be a collaborative team. Ask why or why not.

4. Have them identify and use specific examples of norms used to guide behavior in the team.

5. Then ask for volunteers to answer the query that the narrator poses about the case study: "As you watch this PLC team at work, identify how and why they share best practice."

6. Have the group brainstorm examples of embedded ongoing learning opportunities.

   When participants have finished their lists, have them identify barriers that would make the implementation of each suggestion difficult, and ways to overcome those barriers.

Activity

1. Distribute a copy of the "Ongoing Learning" handout (page 35) to each participant.

2. Have participants work in pairs and use the questions on the handout to assess what Many says about ongoing learning.

3. When they are finished, ask for pairs to volunteer to share their thinking with the group.

Conclusions

This component offers insights about collaborative teamwork from PLC practitioners.

Activity

1. Distribute a copy of the "Critical Issues for Team Consideration" handout (page 36) to each participant; it deals with the parameters and priorities that should guide teams in a PLC.

2. Ask participants to work in pairs to review each issue in the handout and determine whether or not they have worked with colleagues in their schools to address the issues. Stress that

each item is linked by research to either gains in student achievement or increased team effectivenessy.

3. Ask for pairs to volunteer to share their thoughts with the group.

4. Ask participants to develop a series of short statements about the culture of collaboration in PLC schools based on the video components and their own experiences.

   Ask for volunteers to share their statements with the group.

5. Thank participants for engaging in the workshop. Remind them of the time, date, location, and focus of the next workshop

Post-Work

As post-work, assign the following videos to teams:

Dealing With Conflict in a PLC

In *Dealing With Conflict in a PLC*, Tim Kanold asks a mathematics team at Stevenson High School for advice on how to deal with conflict within a collaborative teams. Participants learn that preset norms are invaluable because they help to remove the emotion of any critical feedback; they are also reminded that educators are there to serve the students, so feedback should be given and received in that context.

Post-Work Activity

Ask participants to work in teams to further define their norms. Ask them to pay close attention to how their norms handle conflict within the team. Give them a deadline for submitting their norms.

If you have purchased virtual coaching with your Global PD Teams subscription, work with your admin-istrator to set up a virtual coaching session with a Solution Tree expert and present this work to them for constructive feedback and suggestions.

Overhead Masters

Venn Diagram

Traditional School
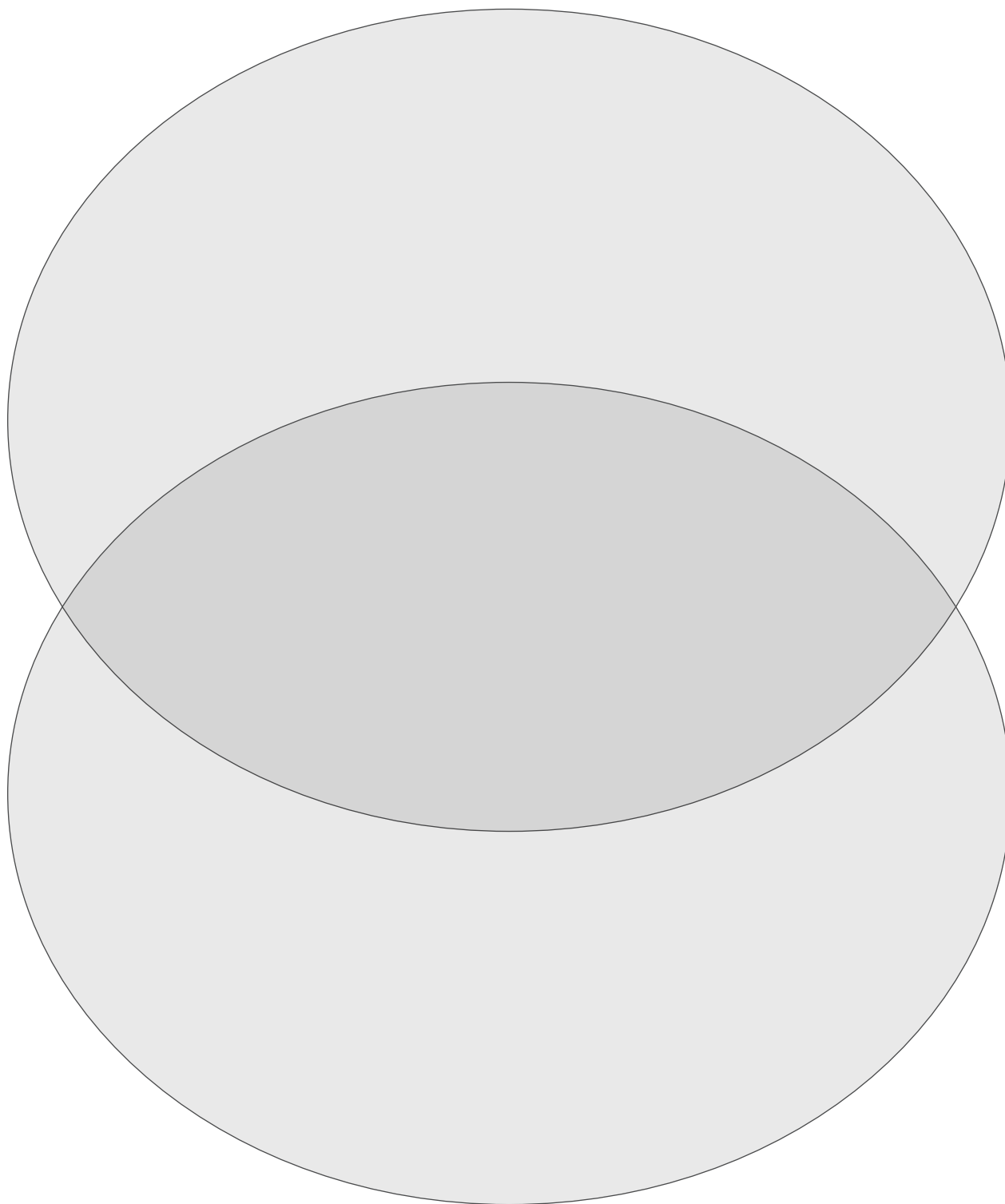
PLC School

Collaborative Team Definition

A group of people working interdependently to achieve a common goal for which members are held mutually accountable. Collaborative teams are the fundamental building blocks of PLCs.

—Adapted from *Learning by Doing*

Team Structures

Horizontal teams: Teachers who teach the same course or grade level

Vertical teams: Teachers who teach the same content over different grade levels

Interdisciplinary teams: Teachers who share common outcomes across different content

Logical links: Teachers who are pursuing the same learning outcomes (including teachers in special education or specialist subjects such as music, art, and physical education)

District or regional teams: Teachers who want to align outcomes across an entire district or region

Electronic teams: Teachers who seek connections with colleagues across the district, state, or world

Making Time for Collaboration

It is imperative that teachers be provided with time to meet during their contractual day. We believe it is insincere and disingenuous for any school district or any school principal to stress the importance of collaboration, and then fail to provide time for collaboration. One of the ways in which organizations demonstrate their priorities is allocation of resources, and in schools, one of the most precious resources is time.

The following list is not meant to be comprehensive but is merely intended to illustrate some of the steps schools and districts have taken to create the prerequisite time for collaboration.

Common Preparation: Build the master schedule to provide daily common preparation periods for teachers of the same course, or department. Each team should then designate one day each week to engage in collaborative, rather than individual planning.

Parallel Scheduling: Schedule common preparation time by assigning the specialists—physical education teachers, librarians, music teachers, art teachers, instructional technologists, guidance counselors, foreign language teachers, and so on—to provide lessons to students across an entire grade level at the same time each day. The team should designate one day each week for collaborative planning. Some schools build back-to-back specialist classes into the master schedule on each team's designated collaborative day, thus creating an extended block of time for the team to meet.

Adjusted Start and End Time of Contractual Day: Members of a team, department, or an entire faculty agree to start their workday early or extend their workday one day each week to gain collaborative team time. In exchange for adding time to one end of the workday, the teachers are compensated by getting the time back on the other end of that day.

For example, on the first day of each school week, the entire staff of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois, begins its workday at 7:30 a.m., rather than the normal 7:45 start-time. From 7:30 to 8:30, the entire faculty engages in collaborative team meetings. Student arrival begins at 7:40, as usual, but the start of class is delayed from the normal 8:05 until 8:30. Students are supervised by administration and noninstructional staff in a variety of optional activities such as breakfast, library and computer research, open gym, study halls, and tutorials. To accommodate for the twenty-five minutes of lost instructional time, five minutes is trimmed from five of the eight fifty-minute class periods. The school day ends at the usual 3:25 p.m., buses run their regular routes, and Stevenson teachers are free to leave at 3:30 rather than the 3:45 time stipulated in their contract. By making these minor adjustments to the schedule on the first day of each week, the entire faculty is guaranteed an hour of

collaborative planning to start each week, but their work day or work week has not been extended by a single minute.

Shared Classes: Teachers across two different grade levels or courses combine their students into one class for instruction. While one teacher/team instructs the students during that period, the other team engages in collaborative work. The teams alternate instructing and collaborating to provide equity in learning time for students and teams. Some schools coordinate shared classes to ensure that older students adopt younger students and serve as literacy buddies, tutors, and mentors.

Group Activities, Events, or Testing: Teams of teachers coordinate activities that require supervision of students rather than instructional expertise (such as videos, resource lessons, read-alouds, assemblies, testing, and so on). Nonteaching staff supervise students while the teachers engage in team collaboration.

Banking Time: Over a designated period of days, instructional minutes are extended beyond the required school day. After banking the desired number of minutes on designated days, the instructional day ends early to allow for faculty collaboration and student enrichment. In a middle school, for example, the traditional instructional day ended at 3:00 p.m., students boarded buses at 3:20, and the teacher contractual day ended at 3:30. The faculty decided to extend the instructional day until 3:10 rather than 3:00. By teaching an extra ten minutes nine days in a row, they bank ninety minutes. On the tenth day, instruction stops at 1:30, and the entire faculty has collaborative team time for two hours. The students remain on campus and are engaged in clubs, enrichment activities, and assemblies sponsored by a variety of parent and community partners and co-supervised by the school's nonteaching staff.

In-Service/Faculty Meeting Time: Schedule extended time for teams to work together on staff development days and during faculty meeting time. Rather than requiring staff to attend a traditional whole-staff in-service session or sit in a faculty meeting while directives and calendar items are read to highly educated professionals, shift the focus and use of these days or meetings so members of teams have extended time to learn with and from each other.

—Adapted from *Learning by Doing*

Parameters for Creating Time for Collaboration

- Students must remain on campus during collaboration.

- It can't increase costs.

- It won't result in a significant loss of instructional time.

—Adapted from *Learning by Doing*

Collective Commitments

- Begin and end meetings on time.

- Stay fully engaged during each meeting.

- Maintain a positive attitude at team meetings—no complaining unless offering a better alternative.

- Listen respectfully to each other.

- Contribute equally to the workload.

- Make decisions on the basis of consensus.

- Fully support each other's efforts to improve student learning.

Handouts

Seven Steps to Building High-Performing Teams

In order to help teachers move from a culture of isolation to a culture of collaboration based upon high-performing teams, leaders should:

1. Embed collaboration in the routine practices of the school by organizing teachers into relevant and meaningful teams.

2. Create time for teams to collaborate during the regular contractual day.

3. Focus the work of teams on the eighteen "Critical Issues for Team Consideration" linked by research to gains in student achievement and/or high-performing teams.

4. Monitor the work of teams through the products they generate as they engage in the collective inquiry of a team doing the "right work" in a professional learning community.

5. Help members of teams clarify their expectations of one another by establishing team norms—that is, the collective commitments they make to one another regarding how they will work together.

6. Insist that every team identify and pursue SMART goals.

7. Provide each teacher and each team with relevant and timely information on student achievement. Provide the basis of comparison essential to converting data into information.

Four Critical Questions of a PLC

What are the "right things" that a school staff should address if high levels of learning are the focus of their collaborative efforts? They should look to the four questions that drive the work of a PLC.

1. What do we want our students to learn?

2. How will we know if each student has learned?

3. How will we respond when some students do not learn?

4. How can we extend and enrich the learning for students who have demonstrated proficiency?

—Adapted from *Learning by Doing*

SMART Goal Worksheet: Third-Grade Team

School: George Washington Elementary   **Team Name:** Third-Grade Team   **Team Leader:** Theresa Smith

Team Members: Ken Thomas, Joe Ramirez, Cathy Armstrong, Amy Wu

District Goal(s): We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas of our middle and secondary schools, using a variety of local, state, and national indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal(s): We will:

1. Increase the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on both a national reading proficiency assessment and on the state test.
2. Eliminate the achievement gap for minority students.

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
Our Reality: Last year, 18 percent of our third graders were unable to meet grade-level proficiency standards in reading fluency and comprehension as measured by a standardized, individualized assessment program for early literacy development. Six percent of Caucasian and 33 percent of minority students were unable to demonstrate proficiency.	We will create a common team schedule that reserves 8:30 to 10:30 for language arts each day. We will designate 45 minutes (9:45 to 10:30) each day for regrouping students into three groups (intensive support, strategic support, and achieving benchmark) based on demonstration of reading fluency and comprehension.	Third-grade team will adhere to the agreed-upon schedule and identify the appropriate reading group for each student by the end of September.	End of September	Students will be assigned to one of three groups on the basis of individual reading assessment results.

SMART Goal Worksheet: Third-Grade Team (continued)

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
Our Goal: This year, 100 percent of third graders will demonstrate proficiency in reading fluency and comprehension as measured by the standardized, individualized program for early literacy.	The team will expand to include the special education teacher, Title I teacher, speech therapist, and literacy coach during the designated 45 minutes each day. Students in need of intensive support will be assigned to a member of the team in groups of no more than four students. Students in need of more strategic support will be assigned to groups of no more than eight students. Students at benchmark proficiency will be assigned to the remaining team members for reading enrichment and extension activities created by the team. Student proficiency will be monitored on an ongoing basis and membership in the groups will be fluid.	The team will: 1. Work with the principal and staff members listed above to create the schedule that allows for this intervention. 2. Create a series of ongoing assessments of reading fluency and comprehension and analyze the results. 3. Align assessments with the content and format of the state test for language arts. 4. Identify specific and precise instructional strategies to address the needs of students assigned to each group. 5. Create a variety of enrichment activities for proficient readers, including Junior Great Books reading circles, independent and group research projects, computer-based explorations, silent sustained reading, and teacher read-alouds.	The team will administer the standardized assessment three times this year: in mid-September, January, and late April. The team will develop and administer its own assessments every 6 weeks.	Evidence will include: 1. Student movement to higher groups 2. All students demonstrating fluency and comprehension on the standardized assessment 3. All students meeting the proficiency standard on the state test in language arts

SMART Goal Worksheet: Eighth-Grade Math

School: Thomas Jefferson Middle School   **Team Name:** Eighth-Grade Math   **Team Leader:** Chris Rauch

Team Members: Chris Carter, Dolores Layco, Mary Fischer

District Goal(s): We will increase student achievement and close the achievement gap in all areas of our middle and secondary schools, using a variety of local, state, and national indicators to document improved learning on the part of our students.

School Goal(s): We will:

1. Reduce the failure rate in our school.

2. Increase the percentage of students scoring at or above the established proficiency standard on the state assessment in all areas.

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
Our Reality: Last year, 24 percent of our students failed one or more semesters of math. And 31 percent of our students were unable to meet the state proficiency standard in math. **Our Goal:** This year, we will reduce the percentage of failing grades to 10 percent or less and the percentage of students unable to meet state standards to no more than 15 percent.	We will align each unit of our math program with state standards, study the results of the last state assessment, identify problem areas, and develop specific strategies to address those areas in our course.	Entire team	We will complete the analysis on the teacher workday prior to the start of the year. We will review our findings prior to the start of each new unit.	Written analysis of state assessment and strategies to address weaknesses
	We will develop common formative assessments and administer them every 3 weeks. These assessments will provide repeated opportunities for students to become familiar with the format used on the state assessment.	Entire team	Formative assessments will be created prior to the start of each unit of instruction throughout the year. They will be administered on a day designated by the team.	Student performance on team-endorsed common assessments

SMART Goal Worksheet: Eighth-Grade Math (continued)			
Team SMART Goal	**Strategies and Action Steps**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**	**Evidence of Effectiveness**
	After each common assessment, we will identify any student who does not meet the established proficiency standard and will work with the counselor to have those students re-assigned from study hall to the math tutoring center.	Members of the entire team will request tutoring as their supervisory responsibility; the team leader will work with the counselor after each assessment.	Assessments will be administered every 3 weeks. Students will be assigned to the tutoring center within 1 week of assessment.	Daily list of students receiving tutoring in math
	We will replace failing grades from our common assessments with the higher grade earned by students who are able to demonstrate proficiency in key skills on subsequent forms of the assessment after completing tutoring.	The entire team will create multiple forms of each assessment. Tutors will administer the assessment after a student has completed the required tutoring.	Multiple forms of an assessment will be created prior to the start of each unit of instruction. Tutors will administer the second assessment within 2 weeks of a student's assignment to the tutoring center.	Compilation of results from subsequent assessments
	We will examine the results of each common assessment in an effort to determine which member of the team is getting the best results on each skill, and then share ideas, methods, and materials for teaching those skills more effectively.	Each member of the team	Ongoing throughout the year each time a common assessment is administered	• Analysis of findings after each common assessment is administered • Decrease in the failure rate • Increase in percentage of students proficient on state assessment

SMART Goal Worksheet: American Government

School: John Adams High School   **Team Name:** American Government Team   **Team Leader:** Tom Botimer

Team Members: Dan Hahn, Andy Bradford, Nick Larsen, Helen Harvey

District Goal(s): We will provide more students with access to our most rigorous curriculum in each subject area and grade level.

School Goal(s): We will increase by at least 10 percent the number of students enrolling in:

1. Advanced placement courses
2. Capstone courses in a departmental sequence

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
Our Reality: All students must complete a semester of American Government as a graduation requirement. Last year only 10 percent of the graduating class fulfilled that requirement by enrolling in advanced placement (AP) American Government.	We will make a presentation in each section of United States History, encouraging students to enroll in AP American Government and listing the advantages for doing so.	The team leader will coordinate the schedule for these presentations with the team leader for United States History. Each member of the team will assist in making these presentations and will distribute a written list of advantages created by the team.	Complete presentations by the end of January prior to students registering for their courses for next year	The presentation has been made in every United States History class
Our Goal: At least 20 percent of the current junior class will enroll in and complete the advanced placement American Government class next year.	We will coordinate with the guidance department to ensure that when counselors register students for classes, they encourage any student who receives an A at the end of the first semester of United States History to enroll in AP American Government.	The team leader will attend the counselors' team meeting to enlist their support, explain advantages of the AP program, and share the team's strategies for supporting students in AP Government.	End of first semester	Minutes of meeting

SMART Goal Worksheet: American Government (continued)

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness
	We will advise parents of the benefits of AP American Government.	The team will draft a letter to parents of students who earn an A in United States History at the end of the semester. The letter will list the advantages of completing this course while in high school for any student planning on attending college. It will also include the team's strategy to provide students with additional support. The team will also create a flyer on the benefits of the AP program to be distributed during parent open house.	The flyer will be created for distribution at the open house in early October. The letter will be sent at the end of the first semester.	Completed documents
	We will create study groups to review material prior to the comprehensive assessments we administer every 6 weeks.	The team will create the common comprehensive assessments. Each member will be responsible for conducting one study group to help students review for these tests. Study groups will be held on three evenings in the week prior to the test.	Ongoing throughout the semester	Completion of common assessments and student performance on common assessments. The number of students earning honor grades on the AP exam in American Government will double over last year's total.

SMART Goal Worksheet

School:

Team Members:

District Goal(s):

School Goal(s):

Team Name: **Team Leader:**

Team SMART Goal	Strategies and Action Steps	Responsibility	Timeline	Evidence of Effectiveness

Ongoing Learning

Tom Many: If we don't find more time for teachers, we don't expect to see a lot of change. The other thing that has made a difference is spending a lot of time very consciously talking about what it looks like: describing it and helping people get some extra training, some more background building shared knowledge around the idea of what good collaboration looks like, giving people the knowledge and the skills so they don't only have the commitment but they also know how to do it, and celebrating the successes they have made around collaboration.

1. How can a school build shared knowledge in its faculty around the idea of what good collaboration looks like?

2. Why is ongoing training critical to the continuous improvement of a school?

3. What are some contexts in which this training can occur?

4. Why do you think it is important to celebrate the successes of collaborative team work?

Critical Issues for Team Consideration

Team Name:

Team Members:

Use the following rating scale to indicate the extent to which each statement is true of your team.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Not True of Our Team   **Our Team Is Addressing This**   **True of Our Team**

1. _____ We have identified team norms and protocols to guide us in working together.

2. _____ We have analyzed student achievement data and established SMART goals to improve on this level of achievement we are working interdependently to attain (SMART goals are specific and strategic, measurable, attainable, results oriented, and time bound. SMART goals are discussed at length on page 89).

3. _____ Each team member is clear on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions (that is, the essential learning) that students will acquire as a result of our course or grade level and each unit within the course or grade level.

4. _____ We have aligned the essential learning with state and district standards and the high-stakes assessments required of our students.

5. _____ We have identified course content and topics we can eliminate to devote more time to the essential curriculum.

6. _____ We have agreed on how to best sequence the content of the course and have established pacing guides to help students achieve the intended essential learning.

7. _____ We have identified the prerequisite knowledge and skills students need in order to master the essential learning of each unit of instruction.

8. _____ We have identified strategies and created instruments to assess whether students have the prerequisite knowledge and skills.

9. _____ We have developed strategies and systems to assist students in acquiring prerequisite knowledge and skills when they are lacking in those areas.

10. _____ We have developed frequent common formative assessments that help us determine each student's mastery of essential learning.

11. _____ We have established the proficiency standard we want each student to achieve on each skill and concept examined with our common assessments.

12. _____ We use the results of our common assessments to assist each other in building on strengths and addressing weaknesses as part of an ongoing process of continuous improvement designed to help students achieve at higher levels.

13. _____ We use the results of our common assessments to identify students who need additional time and support to master essential learning, and we work within the systems and processes of the school to ensure they receive that support.

14. _____ We have agreed on the criteria we will use in judging the quality of student work related to the essential learning of our course, and we continually practice applying those criteria to ensure we are consistent.

15. _____ We have taught students the criteria we will use in judging the quality of their work and provided them with examples.

16. _____ We have developed or utilized common summative assessments that help us assess the strengths and weaknesses of our program.

17. _____ We have established the proficiency standard we want each student to achieve on each skill and concept examined with our summative assessments.

18. _____ We formally evaluate our adherence to team norms and the effectiveness of our team at least twice each year.

References

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Solution Tree

555 North Morton Street
Bloomington, IN 47404

800.733.6786